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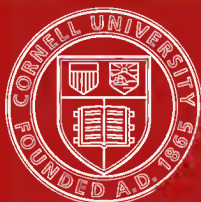


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“WATER COLORS”



TAHITI THE BEAUTIFUL

"WATER COLORS"

SOUTH OF FRANCE

1918-1919

BY

SUSAN FARLEY NICHOLS



BOSTON

THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY

1921

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TO MY FATHER AND MOTHER
WHOSE INTEREST AND SYMPATHY FORM A
VITAL PART OF THEIR CHILDRENS' EXPERIENCE

NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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PART I.
IN HOSPITAL AND TOWN



THE HARBOR, CANNES, FRANCE

FROM A HOSPITAL WINDOW

OVER the red-tiled roofs of the old Riviera town I look north to the gray-green hills and south to the open sea. In the early morning I watch long, dark fishing boats put out to a broad, gloomy sea and the gray horizon. Gray, it lightens gradually, with softer, silver lights far out over the water, to where lies Corsica, a fairy island of palest amethyst. The mirage-like vision deepens in color, is touched with gold by the rising sun and sinks, lost island of the dawn, into an opalescent sea, a sea of softest shimmering blue. Later in the day the colors change to greens and blues unfathomable, while sails appear on the surface, white and flaming red. Oh! to embark on one of those magic red-sailed boats and go wherever the soft Mediterranean breeze might take one, a veritable adventure on a sea of color over the rippling, mingling blues and greens, spreading away to shades unnamable.

Even as I have watched from a hospital window the boats come and go, and the light and shade on the water, I have looked out on another world, subtler, more mysterious, yet picturesque, colorful, an intimate world of romance, of courage and of pain. I have seen, in light and shadow, glimpses of the lives of invalided soldiers from many lands, meeting, coming and going in our hospital wards. There have come here to the sunny shores of their own flowering country the wandering poilus of France, boys of the gray northern cities and of the smallest secluded hamlet of Provence. Wondering

that they had come so far, they met soldiers from countries which lie beyond the horizon even of that gleaming sea: men from low-lying Africa, the East, from the smallest islands across two oceans, far to the south and west, even from the Island of Tahiti, with tropic shores washed by the most distant waters. Like that little boat which I have watched at evening furl dark red sails below my window, the day's voyage done, so each wanderer may have come from some rare adventure, to rest here for a stage on his journey to what other shore, the farthest one, perhaps? I have not been able to follow their lives for long; I have known little of them indeed; and yet there have been revealing glimpses, depths marvelous even as the deepest colors of the sea, or just a surface gleam here and there. I have drawn only what I have seen, a flash of sunlight, a gleam of color, a moving shadow,—such glimpses as I have had of the vast, the gray-blue water, from the tiniest window under the eaves.

NIGHT ARRIVAL

How odd that in this starlit garden I awaited beings from a muddy battle-field only some few hundred miles away, —from another world it seemed! Here was a perfect southern night; the stars brilliant overhead, the branching palms barely stirred by a warm and fragrant breeze, the air clear, almost like some delicious liquid after the hospital staleness. How poignantly one felt the nearness of pain to beauty.

There were gathered about the entrance door to receive them the night watchman, calm and stoical, holding his lantern above his head, infirmières in whisking veils whispering excitedly, some of the stronger patients hastily awakened to help us carry in the stretchers, and sleepily alert in pink pajamas. Down the road there loomed into view gray shapes in the night, and the Red Cross wagons halted at our door, undeniable realities. The stretchers were set down in the hall-way; white, drawn faces and wistful eyes looked out above the blanket or overcoat thrown over the tired figure. They were arrived: the dazed joyless eyes seemed to ask, "where?"

In broken syllables we learned of the exhausting journey of days and nights from the dressing station behind the lines; packed on hard benches, jolted and side-tracked. Some were suffering acutely from the wound gone too long without attention, others merely wished for water. They drank greedily with parched throats.

The heavy boots were pulled off, the ill-smelling coat removed and the last man lifted into bed.

"Where am I?" asked one tired *poilu* dreamily.

"You are on your Riviera," I told him.

"I never expected to come so far! Well, who can tell?"—with a sigh, "*c'est la guerre!* but yes, it is *fort joli!*"

I followed his eyes to the window, it was already daylight, gray and soft. In the harbor below two long fishing-boats, their full sails rounding darkly against a faintly crimson sky, glided out past the light-house.

The boy's eyes on the hospital pillow closed in sleep.

FLEURY AND RIBOT

I FIRST met Fleury in the pantry; a square, dark little man in shiny black waistcoat and spare white apron, his shirt-sleeves rolled up from the white, blue-veined arms, his head bent over the long, old hands which held the cigarette he was lighting.

He flicked the cigarette one side and faced me squarely. Even without his cigarette the head bent forward from the neck. His face was white and wrinkled with a worn hollow on each cheek. The glance, which seemed naturally downward, appeared to follow up from the bloodshot eyes, and to look me all over critically.

"Where have you come from, Mademoiselle?"

"America."

Suddenly he was all friendly attention, breathy, effusive:

"All that way! and I from Algeria—but you have never worked in a hospital before, what?" and he squinted meaningly.

"Well, never have I either, I am an artist, as you might say, I am not an *infirmier*, although you might think it—no, Mademoiselle, you I can tell, I am an artist who has given up all to care for our *blessés*."

With a grandiloquent air Fleury bent back again over his dish-washing to gaze sentimentally into the soapy water—and then to hold each dish above his head, and watch the water drip off the rim with interested attention. When it was done he wiped the long, brown,

ringed hands on his apron and went on talking more to himself than to me:

"Yes, why I work in a hospital I sometimes wonder, since I am an artist really—an artist of gravestones,—*vous savez?* I have earned a great deal of money,—but here! well, here I work for love, yes, all for love,—and how I have worked from the first day of the war! . . . and sometimes I see no end,—no end—" With a sigh Fleury sank down to one side of his stool, while he pulled his matches from a mysterious pocket.

As you come to know the hospital, you come to know Fleury: irregular, effusive, omnipresent.

Each morning it is his pleasure to walk through the long wards and halls with a pan of smoking hot coffee; he wears a fresh apron, and walks in sprightly fashion, swaying forward on the balls of his feet. With his cheery, challenging: "*Bonjour, Messieurs,*" he passes from one bedside to another. It is Fleury who knows all the men,—everyone personally; disgraceful Remy has gambled away his all at *la manille*, and has nothing to send to his wife and little ones. Fleury surreptitiously slips him a ten franc note from his shabby old leather purse. Tahitian Tahiriura, unused to wine, comes in from his first Sunday out with the Frenchmen:

"*Vous savez il a quelque chose.*"

Only Fleury has a look of quick compassion as he shakes his head, tenderly reminiscent.

For the boy who comes to fetch away the dishes which are left, Fleury has saved an extra dish, or portion. "Never mind where I have it from,—she has need of it, the poor widow Malaguti." The little girls who accompany their mother, the scrub-woman, to the hospital, are

his especial favorites; Fleury sets down the coffee to shake hands with them, and ask for their healths, and, "How are the school tasks going?"

All that has nothing to do with routine appeals to Fleury's imagination.

Are there pots and trays and kettles which have never been painted or numbered, or renovated before, Fleury is the one to attend to it now.

Madame L'Infirmière has made the discovery of bed-bugs in one of the *salles*. She is horrified, we are all horrified, *effrayées*, even. Only Fleury smiles, resigned and curious. He has a new and effective method for their eradication,—just let him try it. There is a new room to be put in order, it is not necessary to call carpenters or experts,—“I, Fleury, will attend to it.”

As he works and potters, putting a new number on a tag, fastening a loose bit of wall paper, or stirring an odd mixture of paint, Fleury continues to talk; sometimes more to himself than to others:

“Now I will tell you all about my past and just what brought me here to France. Long ago my parents wished me to marry—*c'était une femme d'Algerie*—but I never did love her, and I ran away;—since then I have traveled—” As always at a crisis in his narrative, his thoughts seem to spread away inarticulately into a strange sort of mumbling. Soon he begins again: “And then too, I have earned a great deal of money, a very great deal in my day, when I worked at my *métier*, when I was an artist—now how much do you think, Mademoiselle, just guess?”

. . . “Yes, it is ridiculous, here I cannot even keep what I earn,—but must give it all to that woman to save

for me; why, I do not know. . . . She, with her authority, it seems, has an odd sort of hold on me, that practical English woman. . . . Ah, no, why should a talented man like me be slaving his life away for no pay, and in a hospital like this one, . . . after all, I think it is for a woman, that sainted one who keeps my money. . . . just for her. . . . Now do you know, all that I eat much of the time is just my piece of bread, and a little plain cheese with it. I am *gourmand*, I tell you, or else I will have nothing. . . . If that is the bell for my soup I cannot go; what is this hospital food? I take no pleasure in eating."

"But it is time to carry coffee to the wards." Even this does not appeal; Fleury goes on with his soliloquy:

"Do you not realize I am an artist? I cannot be interrupted in my work." The neat but trembling fingers continue slowly, while the shabby infirmier Ribot washes the dishes, and may even carry the tureen for to-day.

Is there any sort of entertainment in the hospital, Fleury has his part in the programme. In a shiny black coat, his hair sleek and oily, a very solemn Fleury comes to the edge of the platform, bows forward from the waist down, and then sits on his carefully placed stool, while he plays seriously, always the same odd little tune, on his two straight metal pipes, and another one on his pipe of clay.

The audience may smile and Fleury smiles too, to himself, in his own superior manner. To his audience he bows again stiffly when his performance is done, backing down off the platform.

Each Sunday in the same black coat too short in the sleeves, and wearing a shiny yellow straw hat, Fleury

goes out to "*Passer la journée chez des amis à la campagne.*"

From this expedition to friends in the country Fleury returns at night with an odd variety of stories. One Sunday it was that the American band came to town and Fleury had been listening to them all the afternoon as they played on the *Place*. That evening it is impossible for him to return to his regular work; he is seated unsteadily on his old stool in the pantry, half confused, half delighted:

"Yes, it was this way, Mademoiselle; *merveilleux, merveilleux!* Never have I, an artist and a musician, seen anything like it: there was a man who played all things at once, with his mouth so, with his hands so, and even with his feet," and Fleury leans first this way, now that, clapping with his hands, drumming on the floor with his stick, stamping his feet in unison; "now listen—never mind the soup—" and Ribot may carry up the dishes.

At regular intervals of time there is a day when the whole world appears "*méchant*" to Fleury. He shakes his head instead of nodding it. He talks more about his artistic ability; less about his "*chers blessés.*"

"The men are lazy, shameful——" After all, it is ridiculous for him, Fleury, to be slaving for them, and for so little money too.

"Who is it says I cannot keep what I have got? I will show them—" He asks the nurse for the money she has saved for him.

"Now I need it, that is all!"

He even quarrels with the shabby Ribot who usually is before him aiding in the work: "*le bon garçon!*" But

today he is "*bête, bête, bête, . . . allez!*" Roughly Fleury pushes him out of his way.

"After all what are you, Ribot, but an ordinary farmer's boy, while I, who work with you,—well, few realize what I am,—and then I really work, how I work, while you, lazy one, have a vacation every month to labor on your father's farm. Ah yes, if I had a father and a farm——"

Fleury no longer gazes into the soapy water sentimentally, but deliberately, with conviction, as though he had but just discovered some great truth.

"Je vais casser la cruche," he speaks with determination.

Then, suddenly, he pauses in his work though the pan be still full of unwashed dishes. With temper he shakes his fingers free of the soapy water:

"Mais cette fois ci, c'est trop!"

Snatching the apron from his neck, and forgetful even of his straw hat left behind him on the chair, he lurches out of the room.

One evening Fleury returns to wander singing through the entries or to carol strange tunes from his own little attic window: all his old grudges are forgotten, and the moon and Fleury's love for the world may wax again together.

* * * * *

And there he is back again on his old stool in the pantry quiet and impersonal, rolling a new supply of cigarettes:

"Yes, I have been *à la caravane*," he explains unabashed, in an off-hand manner.

When Fleury goes "*à la caravane*" we begin to take

more note of the shabby Ribot. But Ribot merely shrugs his shoulders wearily, or slowly winks. With bent shoulders, and broad brown arms, Ribot goes about his work as usual; slow, untidy, reliable.

To Fleury, one suggests; Ribot, some command, and yet: "because you do not order me around as the others do—and because you work hard yourself, I will do anything I can for you."

So Ribot is usually ahead of us to carry a tray or to lift a kettle:

"Laissez, laissez."

He washes dishes steadily, laying each flat on the board when it is done: *Voilà!*"

Much of his talk is in monosyllables, and in an even flat voice.

Only when he tells you about his little girls, "*les petites, les orphelines*," there is something like a gleam in his green eyes. "The two little ones come from their orphanage to take dinner with me on Sunday, you will say *bonjour* to them, what?"

On Sunday, Ribot brings them in proudly to see us: Suzette on one hand, Linette on the other. When he walks out with them we hardly know him in full uniform; his cap is pulled straight down over the faded brush of light hair in front, and he wears his tight buttoned coat with a band of black *crêpe* on one sleeve:

"*Pour la mère*," he will tell you in his matter of fact monosyllables. Now I seem to detect a gleam of imagination in the shabby reliable Ribot, for in his little town, and even here, whispering gossip has it that *la mère* ran away and left *les orphelines* when Ribot was at the front.

DEJEUNER

IN fresh white and rustling veils the infirmières enter hurriedly to an informal breakfast table, sparingly set with cups and spoons and the cloth from yesterday. They are eager, refreshed, impatient:

“Lydia, Lydia!”

There is a dull thud on the heavy swinging door into the pantry, and a misshapen little woman comes in, both hands occupied with a tray on which is a tall urn of coffee and a huge pitcher of steaming milk. I sometimes wonder whether it is from carrying trays twice too heavy for her that Lydia’s figure is quite twisted out of shape. Her head is set low between the squarely raised shoulders, the figure above the waist bent backward in too tight a bodice. And she walks on firmly planted heels, with the untidy skirt too long behind, too short in front, and the square-toed shoes turned up as though with kicking open heavy doors. With a loud sigh Lydia places her tray on the side-table, and then, with a nasal, “*B’jour, M’dames,*” stumps out again.

Mademoiselle helps herself to coffee from the urn and then to milk,—just half a cup, each one’s portion; she pours carefully, as though measuring medicine:

“You see? It is exact!”

Monsieur, le Pharmacien, fills his cup less nicely: but what does it matter if Madame, looking over his shoulder, discovers it to be three-quarters full,—“It is well understood, after all he is a man,—*mobilisé.*”

And then, even, if he has not enough he may call for

Lydia, and she will come in and replenish his cup with a sly look.

"*Maintenant*," Monsieur spreads the morning's *Journal* before him as he goes on to sip his coffee and to lift thin slices of toast, daintily, between broad fingers.

The elderly English lady sits a little sadly at our informal table,—“I’ve just the bread I’ve over from yesterday—no, I declare I could never fancy this Continental breakfast, and in these times especially,—still I shall have my tea after,” she shakes her head at Monsieur le Pharmacien’s complacent appetite, “and how is it you find the place, Monsieur, to toast your bread in the morning?”

“Mademoiselle, if you will permit me to say so, I find that you English are ever too thorough, with such a capacity to endure! You have your tea, as you say,—but for the rest,—*Mon Dieu!* Now for toast in the morning, *par exemple*,—you can always find just a little room, I should think, beside the pots of our *blessés*?”

“Never for my own needs, Monsieur! Besides, I should not have the time. All I can do is just to dress in these odd clothes, you see I’m not used to uniform,—”

With a quick, inclusive glance at the indefinite lines of the elderly figure opposite, Monsieur would perhaps go on with his recommendations, were it not for the irresistible appeal of the rather large type in the *Journal* spread before him:

Aha!—“*La Situation Militaire, . . . nous ameliorons nos positions en plusieurs points*,—” so he announces to a listening table.

. . . “But do tell me how you make your veil fit so nicely, Mademoiselle,” benignly uninterrupted, the gentle-voiced lady goes on: “Will you show me some time after

breakfast? Though I am an old woman, and my work doing the mending is so unimportant compared with all of yours,—still all anyone can do is just her own part in this world,—yet of course I know the uniform's important, and I want to wear the shoes too,—but my feet aren't as strong as they used to be when I ran about all day among those factory people in the East End. I so often wish I could do more, but really, you see, as I was telling you, I am sent to the Riviera for my health. Still I find there are always little things I can do to help and especially for the men, poor things. I like to sit and talk to the poor boys in the long evenings. I feel sometimes they like to see an old lady; at any rate, they will always laugh at my jokes,—I give them a little advice too now and then; it may remind them of their mothers perhaps. I have given them all copies of the *Evangile*, and then I tell them, 'remember always that God cares for you.' . . . But you will tell me some time how you fix your veil so prettily, will you not, Mademoiselle,—and then you are always so well starched too,—who is your *blanchisseuse*?"

"*Aha, écoutez, Mesdames,—'de notre côté nous avons réussi deux opérations de détail, au nord de Faverolles nous avons avancé notre ligne d'environ 150 mètres de même dans la région à l'ouest de Bassières,' . . .*" Monsieur goes on, absorbed in his paper; and the advancing French lines, represented by his knife and spoon, are spread far over the table-cloth.

"You were asking about the *blanchisseuse*? It is Madeleine, the pretty girl with such red cheeks, roses in her hat; you know she comes each alternate day with the baskets."

"That reminds me,—clean linen day,—with all the rest there is to do, those lists to prepare,—such a business."

"Ah, Miss, you are so thorough,—but why bother with lists—what do they mean, indeed? So long as the men have what they need, what is comfortable,—"

"Little Madeleine grows prettier every day, don't you think so? I have often seen the men stop at her house when they are *à la sortie* on Sundays."

"Just the same her mother should not allow her to run about the town as she does,—I hope she won't be sorry for it,—some day——"

After snatches at conversation, Mesdames les Infirmières scatter from the table, one after the other,—each bearing the individual jar of marmalade or sugar and what remains of yesterday's portion of black bread carefully wrapped in a napkin.

Only Monsieur le Pharmacien still sits over the half empty cup while his eyes follow the news in the paper spread before him:

"Aha . . . '*Question du Sucre, qui trompe-t-on?*' Are we not perhaps all deceived with these ridiculous rations? . . . '*on parle et on écrit abondamment sur les étranges retards dans la distribution du Sucre dont notre département est actuellement victime*' . . . " What news he may read from his local *Journal* strikes very nearly to Monsieur's inner man, even as there are lines which have aroused the patriotic soul of the Frenchman at his meagre breakfast, so early in the morning.

Shaking his head over his own pot of sugar which grows lower with every day, slowly sighing, Monsieur rises with an effort:

"Allons! Au travail . . . "

Later in the day, after hard work, we may settle in more leisurely fashion over tall glasses of red wine and dishes of steaming *purée*, to the business of dining. Now we are in our appointed places and quite *en famille*. Madame *l'econome* and the Doctor make their appearance among us for the first time; you will understand of course they have eaten earlier, but in their rooms. From their place at the head of our board as from a height, they smile to each of us now a leisurely Good-morning, a benign and special greeting, which is answered in more casual manner, as we slip to our places down the table. Madame handles her knife, fork and wine-glass with precision, and overlooks the table critically, surveying from her eminence the dishes set before her. Lydia has placed a large tray covered with a napkin on the table, and watches, her head critically on one side, while we each help ourselves to a triangular piece of neatly cut bread. Every piece is exactly the size of every other, except for two twice as big for Monsieur le Pharmacien and the Doctor.

Madame's naive wonderment renews itself over each day's black loaf:

"But what do you think of the bread to-day? Blacker than yesterday, what?"

Monsieur le Docteur at her elbow dips his piece ruminatively in his wine. Mademoiselle, her dainty nose ever so slightly raised, spreads hers thick with fresh butter. M. le Pharmacien, always diplomatically subservient to Madame's conversational lead, holds his piece to the light critically before adventuring further:

"Too much bran. I shall go later to the town and complain to the baker."

"Ah, please do," says Madame. "I am sure I cannot eat such a heavy loaf and even the poor *blessés* will find it difficult with their soup. Is it not strange, really, what sort of things we will speak of now, just bread, and what we eat! While formerly we discussed people everyone knew, far more interesting, but then everyone at one table knew everyone else. But what is this you bring us to-day, Lydia? Ugh, these heavy dishes! My son, will not you make a complaint to the kitchen? I declare I am afraid of the cook, but who can tell him as well as yourself, *mobilisé* and a doctor, that beans and beans and ever beans again,—Ah well, perhaps it is not we who are used to better things should complain, but think, at least, of your *malades*!"

Monsieur le Docteur, with long black beard and eye-glasses, will listen respectfully, only turning from his mother now and then to address a simple and shy remark to the new little bride who lives under the same roof with the rest of us. She is a shy little person, conspicuously without efficiency or hospital uniform, with uncovered hair and low-cut frocks:

"You will need your large hat when you go for your walk, today, *ma chérie, quelle chaleur!* And would you perhaps like to take Maman's little dog for his walk? He is always gentle and good."

On Madame's right our Pharmacien is increasingly sure of his opinion on Politics, the Arts and sentiments as the meal advances. He addresses all who will listen, but more particularly the half-Italian lady on his right. "Have you seen the *Journal* to-day, and what do you think of this fellow d'Annunzio?"

"But, Monsieur, how can you ask? Is it not magnificent? Indeed I am proud of the chivalry of Italy!"

"I ask pardon, Mademoiselle, but you hardly understand. You Italians are noble, generous, but children, children. Bah, you do not know, you have not suffered as we in this country. To drop notes on Vienna after they had bombed Venice? Foolishness, childish—"

He spread out his hands in inarticulate vehemence. The half-Italian beside him had turned to him flushing, proud, but not hurt:

"I fear it is you who cannot understand, Monsieur."

Many pairs of eyes at our table seem to look at him questioningly, as though from a height.

Monsieur has succeeded in burying all of his face, except for the grey beard, behind his raised wine-glass.

"The poet, d'Annunzio, is a great man surely," he begins in a tone of soothing compromise, "*ce sont les mots, les mots qui nous enivrent nous Français.*"

But his immediate neighbor has turned from him, more interested in practical matters: English, Canadian, American, we converse in temperate language, are only reasonably divided in opinion, stoical over the lack of potatoes, the beans, the eternally reappearing *purée*.

But

"Que m'importe que tu sois sage?
Sois belle et sois triste!"

still it is the voice of Monsieur le Pharmacien quoting now to pretty Mademoiselle. Her seat is removed from his, of course, where she sits with other young French girls and the elderly Comtesse de M.

She lifts a protesting hand. "Ah, Baudelaire! that man! pfui, his *Fleurs du Mal*! He is not to my liking, Monsieur. Love . . ." her voice becomes languid. The Pharmacien bends to hear.

"Love," continues Mademoiselle, "to my thinking is exquisite, like music, like water lapping. You know Lamartine's *Lac*?"

The Pharmacien bows deferentially to her choice.

"Aimons donc, aimons donc! de l'heure fugitive,
Hâtons—nous,"

"Ah, no, not those lines are most melodious, but these, Monsieur, listen:

"Où l'amour à longs flots nous verse le bonheur," . .

Between and around them the conversation ebbs and flows continuous in solo and crescendo chorus.

"How did the night pass, Madame de M.?"

"Oh, everything very calm now,—I had good opportunity to read. Last night I was reading *Après la Morte, mystique*, interesting."

Madame l'Infirmière *militaire*, with white hair and quick, nervous movements, on leave from her front line hospital, shivers nervously.

"Brrrrrrrrh,—I could not read such a book these quiet nights in the country. Really I find the nights here too quiet to sleep, not enough to do in the daytime to get really tired. Now *au front*, I tell you where I had 300 men, and all under my care,—there was a story and something to do! Or even in Paris during the air raids,—*très*

sociable,—everyone meets to talk in the cellar, the children bring their toys, and when all is over it is just, *bonsoir, Messieurs, Mesdames*, and we may go to bed and sleep the better."

Madame continues to eat and sprinkle salt on her food with nervous energy.

"Ah, to have been in Paris!" the *jeune fille* from Provence, wistful-eyed, clasps her slender hands longingly. "But before the war Papa said I was too young and then *ce n'était pas le moment*. But after the war, when traveling is easier, I shall really go some day."

"Yet, Mademoiselle, of Nice we know you can tell us,—what are the latest modes, and did you have a gay time *à la sortie*?"

To the general inquiry Mademoiselle giggles unresponsive, but nudging her nearest neighbor:

"Gilberte, I found some designs, you would not believe it, come to my room with your embroidery frames and then I will show you, and such a hat, *ravissant*!"

"*Ecoutez, Mesdames*," again the Pharmacien's heavier tones penetrate the lighter chatter, "there was an old man came over from Nice this morning wanting to earn a few francs,—and I, desiring to help the poor *vieux*, told him he might come to tell all our fortunes to-night —"

"But, Monsieur, if the good God meant us to know the future"

"Pooh, pooh, do not be concerned, dear Miss, it is only a joke, after all. This old man is no *savant*, I think for myself, he knows nothing. Still he will amuse the poor *blessés*; all young people wish to be told whom they will marry. So he will find for each some *fiancée*."

"Well, for sensible, religious people," her voice grows in conviction.

"Why, yes, even for you—good Miss."

"I, for one, Monsieur, shall not come to your séance."

"Then I shall ask him,—'Who, Monsieur, is that lady who is absent from our meeting, she whom we miss so especially?' And he will reply, 'Why, of course, Monsieur, that is simple, it is the good Miss who sits in her room with her Bible.' "

"Monsieur!"

Little old Madame N. with the rounded, soft lines, is listening to right and to left, her head on one side, then another: "Well, well, there now,—allow me to fill your glass, Monsieur, Miss—" so her pleasing, soft, voice, intervenes. "What? No wine? Your tea, you say. Beans then. No? You eat nothing!" Passing plates and bottles to right and to left, the while she fussily chooses her own dainty forkfuls.

"Yes, yes, the meat is *assez bien* to-day. Well, well, *voilà!* I may save a little piece for my Miquette at home, I think. Such a good little cat, gray and soft, and comes trotting to meet me when I go home at night, and lays her gray cheek against mine. Well, *excusez, excusez*, Messieurs, Mesdames,—but I must hurry away,—I promised a game of checkers to Pierre *brave petit*, and then there are the bands to wash, and still I must make the beds . . . while all the time Miquette is waiting for me, at home,—*bonne petite chatte,—voilà,—*" still with softly purring words Madame has slipped some choice morsels into a mysterious bag under the table and hurries away.

Madame D. pushes back her chair followed by the son and daughter-in-law.

"My son, have you dinner for Fifi, good little dog?"

"Yes, Maman."

Monsieur le Docteur heaps his emptied plate with the remaining spoonfuls on the serving dishes, and follows his wife and mother to the door. They turn to us bowing pleasantly, and in unison:

"Bonsoir, Messieurs, Mesdames."

Gradually the little company breaks up,—only Mademoiselle may linger over the last slow mouthfuls. The Pharmacien has risen to his feet and stands over her declaiming soulfully, if not always accurately:

"Il pleut dans mon coeur
Comme il pleut dans la ville—"

"But *ravissant*," sighs Mademoiselle, "*est elle brune, blonde ou rousse?*" She quotes from their poet,—but it is more than this her eyes are asking.

"*Quelle est cette langueur*—" the Pharmacien in his turn inquires. And Lydia clatters away the dishes.

L'OUVROIR

THE hospital *ouvroir* is an aristocratic, cushioned little world apart, secluded behind heavy closed doors, well removed from hospital odors, the bustle of the arriving convoy of sick and wounded, the distressing knowledge of hospital detail. Here middle-aged ladies work in spotless, correct uniforms and unsoiled hands. They would seem to have brought with them the plush furniture, the silk hangings, the heavy rug from their own little salons at home. As they sit, uninterrupted, over the light white gauze or sewing, the conversation is much of homely, little, pretty things, in easily harmonious, flowing voices. The white ringed hands work busily, restlessly. . . .

There is linen to be sorted, socks counted, shirts stacked on the shelves, bandages wrapped and packed; the ladies are active, executive, bustling; they fold, unfold and pack away with firm, precise fingers, their voices rise impulsively in tone and vigor. Madame B. with the gray hair and the portly figure is here and there directing—at her skirt trots her bushy brown Pomeranian on dainty alert legs: the red-ribboned bell about his neck tinkles lightly.

When supplies are asked for Madame is punctilious and careful about disturbing her neat piles.

"Who is it you say was *opéré* to-day that we must give out so many compresses? Poor Martin? Ah, but yes, he is a brave little one and must get well. . . . A convoy has arrived? Tell me how many? Ah, is not that fortunate! Exactly enough pieces to go around, but

not one more. These poor men! how good it will seem to them to have clean shirts and warm socks for their feet. But surely the *blessés* will soon be better here, *mes chères*."

There is always just what is needed, what is comforting in the neat piles which Mesdames have stacked. Like a kindly directing Providence, wisely knowing and gently providing for the needs of a turbulent world apart, undisturbed, the work of the *ouvroir* goes on, has gone on, for weeks, for months, and years. The gilt flowered clock on the mantel ticks away full, busy moments.

THE ARRIVAL

EVERYTHING is in readiness to receive them;—the long rows of white hospital cots stand immaculate and empty with covers turned squarely at the corners, Red Cross bags of clean linen laid out. In the kitchen the water is left to heat, white jugs of tea and *tisanes* prepared.

The straggling procession of stooping or lame figures, in the shabby, dirty or ill-smelling blue, files in,—in the rear, the orderlies with their stretcher cases.

Each *blessé* is quickly assigned his number; to bed, the *salle de pansement*, the washrooms. The procession of soldiers is unthinking and joyless it seems, only the infirmières in whisking white and the Doctor who administers in his neat apron and close-cut beard, are thoroughly satisfied. Hospital procedure is faultless: the nurse passes from bed to bed to ask the *blessé* his name; he tells it:

“Garreau, and then there are my wife and little girls at home, too”—but here to-night he is Number 59, and she must pass on to the next.

We carry trays from bed to bed,—a bottle of red wine and a piece of neatly cut bread for each one. We wonder if they will not find our fare better than that they are used to in the trenches.

“*Dans les tranchées?* We have the *Pinard* there to make us happy,—the bread is blacker than yours, but then we have all we want,—we may help ourselves—”

Tall jugs of herb-tea are at the last passed around; hot *tisane* just brewed from fresh, strengthening herbs.

It is the cosy evening drink, we know, of their own little homes in the provinces.

Yet,—“What is it? . . . *tisane*?” They smack their lips questioningly, not sure whether they altogether like it.

“Ah, well,—it is a long time since we have been *chez nous*, you understand,—grown unaccustomed to the taste perhaps.”

At the last we tuck the sheets firmly about each one; we hope they will have a good night and be less tired tomorrow.

One of them is tossing on his bed a bit: “The feathers, somehow, seem all soft and uneven.”

We leave them quietly, turning down the lights, all is arranged.

The next morning all is rearranged, happy, *égayé*: these grimy soldiers seem weary children just come home,—sighing, laughing, jesting, one with another, glad to be here and to stay awhile;—yes, in short they are *chez eux*.

Pipes and cards are had out of the knapsacks, groups form around a table, chair or bed, “*n’importe*,” to toss cards or coppers for their favorite game *la manille*. Even the *couché* is unpacking the bag slung at his bed-post, whence he pulls his old purse, his coppers, his letters,—and is soon scribbling in pencil and hot haste for the *Poste*. Another is sewing patches on shabby coat or leggings. Still the beloved soldier’s cap is worn jauntily on one side of the head,—an odd sort of night-cap or accompaniment for pink pajamas.

Now, and from the first day, all would wish to take some part in the management of this new home, their hospital. They are interested and curious as to the par-

ticular treatment which they are getting; they wish to help take care of each other and are politely afraid that "Mesdames les Infirmières" work too hard. They will make their own beds and dust with more speed than care. They spend hours in the arrangement of their flowers and their own critical admiration of the bouquet in its tasteful combination of color. Prints and photographs of family groups are fastened on white hospital walls. Week-old newspapers and tobacco smoke accumulate in spite of all one can do:

Finally,—“Here it is as cosy as back in the trenches,” says one seasoned old *poilu* over his pipe and the checker-board.

The evening’s jug of *tisane* is passed from bed to bed with many a joke and familiar comment:

“It is a *bon petit verre* you bring us.”

“Why, yes, Mademoiselle is our *Madelon*,—*Madelon*, *Madelon*,—you know our song?”

“Bonsoir.”

“Bonne Nuit,”—and then they sleep.

GARDES DE NUIT

BLUE-PAPERED lights twinkle down the long hall-ways,—and there comes whispering old Madame Malaguti like some whirring night beetle, her face thin and gaunt and with glasses, the brilliant candle before her, her finger laid close on her lips.

In the pantry the stout, square, gray old Cazemelias in black cap and spare white apron,—wise man in the town and head mason, here looks over his large nose and glasses to fussily stir in the pots some simple night drink for his *blessés*.

Up and down-stairs, continually rounding the hospital, there passes the Comtesse de Montmeche, majestic, stalwart and silent, with night-light carefully shaded.

POILUS

GRADUALLY we come to know them,—there is Lafitte with the handsome, Basque face, the kind words of strong Southern twang, he who most diligently dusts and scrubs out the rooms and the bath-tubs.

Little Martin has a fresh child's face and pink cheeks. He sketches the boats from his window, the flowers he brings from the garden, until those bright little water-colors adorn all our hospital wall.

Gilbert sits patient all day, always prepared for a visit; his hair is neatly parted in the middle, his long slender hands precisely folded—those beautifully kept hands, white, like a woman's, in contrast even with the coarse sheet on which they are lying. He just wants to talk about his home before the war. It is three years since he has seen his mother, the sister and brothers. They are from the invaded districts, but fortunately all had escaped when the Germans came. He was young then, just a child, but this would not have mattered; many of the comrades at school had been taken away by the Boches, for various kinds of work, caring for the horses and so forth. He had made a most miraculous escape truly—he would go on to tell us about it and, those years since, with the army at Salonique, so far from his own village. But he is too weak to talk long, with a high color and dark eyes which look the larger in a thin face.

Remy is tall and red-belted, long-limbed, hollow-chested, with something the look of a brigand in his gaunt, hard face with the glistening blue eyes and uncared-for

beard. He will conform to no hospital rules and is even rebellious that he can buy no shoes in town.

"If we are not allowed shoe-leather I shall run bare-foot right through the streets of Cannes, out on your *Croisette*, even, I tell you,—you shall see, you shall see!"

Here in ugly bare feet, sun-burned and hardened, swinging his long arms, his cap hanging quite off the back of his head, he strides through our halls,—noisy, jesting, laughing, his arm about some comrade of smaller stature.

When Fleury and Ribot quarrel over the soup, Remy gives them a rough word of encouragement for their difference as he wrests the tureen from them and himself undertakes distribution. Only little old Madame Nier is never afraid of the striding, red-belted Remy. Like some purring white cat she trots behind him encouraging with her soft voice and the ladle:

"Eh bien,—mon petit, brave petit, de la soupe?"



POILUS

LES MÔMES

WHAT a child he is, this young French soldier! In spite of his heavy, bristling, black moustache he presents a child's countenance with two round, dark, wondering eyes,—for all the world like a picture of the children of de Monvel. Only take away the moustache and put him into a black school apron and you will have a figure quite familiar, if long ago you read French children's books. His smile and ways are easy, pleasant, provincial,—his speech a bit drawling with the odd Southern twang. He is a farmer's boy from the Midi, "*près Toulouse*."

His mother and father have never left their farm-land, but he has been very far and has even seen the Americans. What does he think of them? With his easy smile,—

"*Ils sont gentils, ils donnent des cigarettes*."

He has no wise words, no expressed philosophy; he sees the world through sad, wondering, round child's eyes, and only shakes his head:

"*C'est malheureux se laisser tuer comme ça*."

Question him about his prospects, the farm-land which he will inherit; he is a child and has not yet thought of these things. The fact of his youth is the war,—he is a wanderer from the homeland, a playfellow with his *camarades*—for the Future?—"Ah oui, si je ne suis pas mort—"

THE TOY SOLDIER

WE call him our little toy soldier, with his waxen-smooth red and white cheeks, the small piquant nose, scarlet lips, the round, dark, bright beadlike eyes, and the black moustache that curls upward.

Even here in the hospital he is dressed all correctly, every child would know him a soldier; with his red trousers, black striped,—the snug blue coat and brass buttons, while on his head, to one side, is the round, tight, black velvet cap.

His walk is springy with neat and exact little steps. When he meets you he will neither smile nor speak the *Bonjour*, but stops to raise the left hand to the cap in a stiff and wooden salute. The right sleeve of his coat hangs loosely down, quite limp and empty, as if the arm inside were clean blown away by a ball from out some toy cannon. But when he came to the Dressings Room and his left hand rolled up the right sleeve, I saw where a real arm had been. . . .

"It hurts?"

"No," and slowly he smiled, a bit sadly.

"What is it then?"

"I think there is something I'd tell you,—it is of my fiancée. You know at home, Mademoiselle, I have a fiancée, a *toute petite fiancée*."

"Yes, do tell me about her."

"Her father's farm adjoins my father's farm in the country. As children, she and I played together, always

together. I would toss her in the hay and she picked nosegays for me."

"Go on—"

"As we grew older we worked side by side in the fields; pretty she was with the grace of a corn-flower. . . . When the call to arms came, for the first time in our lives we were parted. I held her then, and we kissed good-by—and she promised that when I returned we should marry. For these three years she has sent me her sweet, pretty, neat little notes, to tell me that always she loved me. . . . When I had lost my right arm I was almost quite glad for now I might return to Odette."

His idle left hand played uneasily with the paper it crumpled. This saddest of letters had come! The gruff old *paysan* father would not consent to the wedding. His daughter marry a cripple? What sort of a farmer would he make, when the two old people were gone, to care for her and the farm-land? All this Odette had written and sent with her tears and her kisses. . . . The smooth pink and white face looked nearly nonplussed. Could there be tears in the eyes of a little toy soldier?

"I have my left arm and my pension, and I love her as much now as ever."

"Go marry her then."

"But the father?"

"But you are the lover,—will she then stay behind in her father's house when you come to fetch her?"

"But children must do as the fathers . . ."

"Pooh! the old father! Courage! Be brave! You a soldier! Marry Odette and I will send her a silver tea-set for the wedding."

"A silver tea service,—no,—truly?"

"But yes! a small reward for your courage!"

"Mademoiselle, is it true?"

"Most certain."

"A silver tea service! That gruff old father would give his consent if he knew it! A gift not alone for Odette, but her children, and their children's children," —and then I saw he could laugh, this little toy soldier!

JOUR DE FETE

(JULY 4, 1918)

A DARK, mysterious object seemed to flutter continuously against the light expanse of sky, all that was visible of the out-of-doors from the corner of the hospital room where I was used to open my eyes in the morning. When I went to the window for a nearer view I discovered the colors red and blue,—of course, it was an American flag fluttering from the flag-pole on top the old fortress tower.

The little flag fluttering there so high above the town seemed a sign and token of the holiday festivity which prevailed below. From church towers the bells were ringing, the fronts of the little shops were draped in bunting, flags fluttered from windows, holiday crowds filled the streets; the bazars, especially colorful in appearance, displayed for sale on their stands the flags of America and of all the Allies. Here women and children stopped in on their holiday walk to bargain for "*un tout petit drapeau*," but it was always the "*drapeau Americain*" which they wished to carry home, or to wear in cap or button-hole.

In the hospital the *dames infirmières* hurried about their work with especial briskness, for there was to be fête this afternoon, they informed me with joyous and meaning glances. They were all wearing a knot of gay tricolor somewhere on their white costumes, or a band of it tied

about the arm. Motherly old Madame Nier embraced me on both cheeks:

"This is your *jour de fête*, and that is for America."

Today I was "*l'enfant Américaine*," and treated by all as a sort of holiday child. I was released from regular duty, and the Directrice of the hospital, herself, came to congratulate me and to ask if I would not have the great goodness to distribute some tiny American flags which she had procured for each of the men in the wards. They would be so happy to have a word with an American to-day.

I was called away from chatter with the men to the *réfectoire*, where a piano had been set up for the occasion, and I found most of the hospital staff and convalescents gathered about it to learn what they called "*l'Hymne Américain*." I was to demonstrate to them the words and tune.

In the afternoon all was actually *en fête* at the hospital. The men had decorated their large dining-hall with golden-rod and other flowers, a stage was put up at the end and rows of wooden benches placed for the audience. Caisson, our wounded *sous-officier*, in a new blue uniform and stiff boots, which clinked at the heels as he stopped in front of each row of benches, distributed neatly-penned programmes.

One after another the performers stepped to the edge of the platform, a little awkwardly, with some precision; they looked shy at first, self-consciously dressed-up; most of them had never worn their full uniform in hospital before, and certainly not the decorations. They wore their hair brushed flat down or else curled for the occasion,

the little American flag pinned conspicuously to the front of each coat.

A fair, delicate-looking boy, gesturing a bit stiffly with his one arm, sang in a sweet voice, which lacked in strength, of the Belgian child as he played with his little wooden gun "*c'était un petit gars de sept ans*," and of the German officer who shot him so cruelly. A poilu with drooping moustache and eyes that sloped dreamily at the corners, enchanted with his soft airs and sentimental words. A dark, rough man sang in a full untutored voice of the trenches, the dreams and wine and death, the love and life of his comrades, the *poilus*. These performers who seemed shy at first, became gradually entirely oblivious of the audience; they sang, they recited, they performed; pathetic, patriotic, sentimental, dramatic or gay, for the sheer joy of the performance and the indulgence of their spirit.

At length the last one was forcibly made to descend from the platform, and the chosen players of the evening came on in a witty one-act comedy of their own choosing, presented with considerable elegance and finish.

After this the stage was given over to entertainment of a very different nature; jokes and horse-play, sheer frolic and acrobatic stunts,—until the Doctor feared for the safety of partly healed arms and legs. The Directeur called for the National airs, a sign that the entertainment had all but outlasted the evening.

It was the American Hymn and not the *Marseillaise* which tonight might have seemed the native song of France. Whether it was planned to this effect or not, the *Marseillaise* was merely a part of the regular programme, sung somewhat artificially, in operatic manner by a lady

draped in the tricolor for the occasion. The men did not venture to mingle their rude voices with the operatic notes, and we all applauded perfunctorily when it was done.

For the American air the other American nurse and I were called to the front of the platform. Behind us all the singers of the evening grouped themselves for the chorus. Soon the entire gathering was joining us, and the tune and words rolled out, given a new lightness and almost rollicking rhythm in these lusty French voices.

Cheers and shouts of "*Vive l'Amérique et les Américains!*" greeted the closing bars, and the men gathered about us two Americans to offer their heartfelt thanks and congratulations:

"Was that the song of America?—well surely it was pretty." And then they must thank us too for the manner in which we had sung, for the way in which we had given our song interpretation.

On our parts we thanked them for the pleasure they had provided, for the way in which they celebrated this, our National Holiday. But to the French *poilu* will ever belong the last word in a graceful expression of gratitude:

"It is we who should thank the Americans," one of them said. "All France is sad, and even our own festal days cannot be happy ones. It is for this reason we must thank the Americans especially, that they have allowed us to share in their own holiday when we may be glad again with them."

THE POSTMAN-PRIEST

"MONSIEUR" BARRALL has a round jovial face and figure, bright black eyes and long black beard. On week-day mornings, alert in short knickerbockers and black stockings, he makes the round of the hospital with mail-bag and letters. He is not the distributor of letters only, but scraps and items of news from town. With an air of confident assurance, certain of a quick answering smile from the sick-bed, he hands out his letters, calling each patient by name. But "Monsieur" Barrall does not linger at this bedside or that even over the gossip he has from *en ville*. His progress from bed to bed is in rapid, hurrying short footsteps with an occasional quick glance at the large gold watch which he carries, like Alice's rabbit in progress toward its burrow. The daily distribution over, Père Barrall hurries from material duties to his little room under the roof where he reads in good old books, and writes from what he reads and his own daily observations on life. They are simple words, the humble Philosophy of the Postman-Priest,—his sermon for Mass on Sunday.

AT MASS

ONLY on Saturday afternoons the work of the *ouvroir* is interrupted. *Mesdames* have brought from home baskets of carefully tended garden flowers. With exquisite precision they arrange and place the tall vases in our bleak hospital hallway,—“it is for *l’église des blessés*, tomorrow.”

On Sunday morning a crabbed old figure walks through the halls. He rings a bell as he goes and his keen blue eyes glance shyly up from under his shaggy white eyebrows to see who will answer his summons. Doors open all down the dusky corridors as the *poilus* come out from their rooms, smoothing their hair with their hands, pulling on their blue overcoats. So they follow the harsh tinkle of the old porter’s bell as they shuffle after—down the long stairway, into the hallway for Mass.

And there they sit in bent-shouldered rows, one behind another, until the door swings open into a bright little chapel, all tinsel and flowers. There steps out a familiar, black-gowned figure, and Père Barrall is there to say the Mass. Faithful Ribot sits in a corner to ring the *sanctus* bell, and the long blue rows bend to the prayers in unison.

The music of the little organ is difficult, the notes querulous, intermittent at first, then high and weak and incongruous as a woman’s voice singing alone a gay, martial air to lead that fuller chorus of soldiers:

O Jeanne d’Arc
Prends de nouveau ta place
Au front du regiment,

Et va lutter hors de l' Alsace
Jusqu'au dernier des Allemands.
O Jeanne d'Arc à la frontière
Tes fils combattent l'étranger,
A leurs secours, vole O guerrière !
Car la patrie est en danger.
O bouclier de la Patrie
Garde nos fils, qu'ils soient vainqueurs ;
Nous chanterons, l'âme attendrie,
Vive la France ! la haut les coeurs.*

Then Père Barrall, the black-bearded priest, speaks in simple words an informal, sensible sermon:

"My good children, brave little soldiers of France, to you I speak especially. But indeed all are soldiers fighting their own stern battle of Life. You may be ill, yet do not be discouraged. What is your weapon? Courage! Courage is necessary for every occasion. Live each day then as it comes, courageously. Follow your generals, be obedient to your elders, your superiors. Above all, be brave, and trust to the day of Victory, which shall most surely dawn for the valiant. For remember that the Good God is ever on their side: let them march with fortitude under His banner. . . ."

The military rows on the bench relax a little and one poilu nudges another.

* A hymn customarily sung at the soldiers' Mass to the tune of "Nous Voulons Dieu," an air with a martial swing and rhythm.

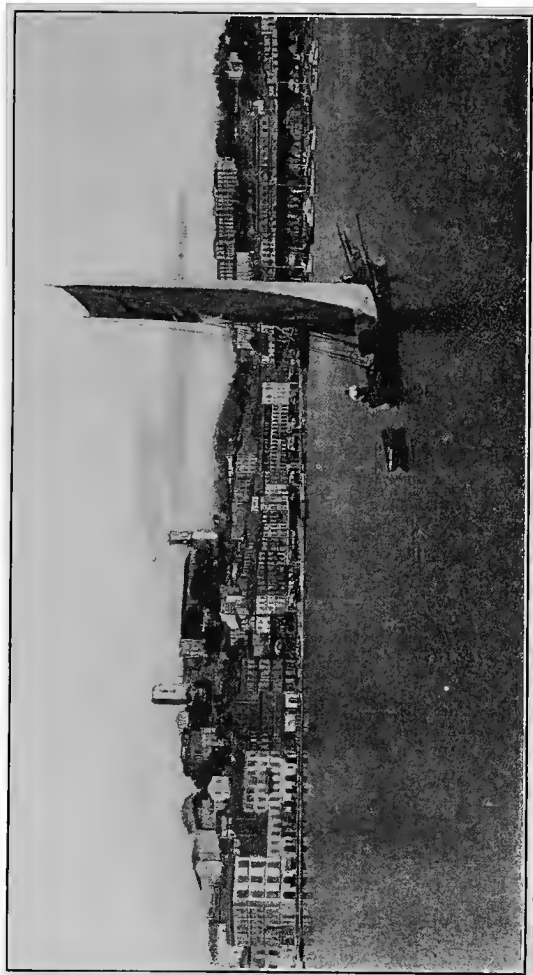
DAYS OFF

THEY lie on high sunny banks in the garden, or they sit in idle rows by the street, their feet on the railing; looking out at the passers-by, laughing their dry jests at this and at that one.

They have "*cartes de sorties*" for Thursdays and Sundays, when they put on their uniforms, quite complete, or gray and shabby and old,—ragged maybe,—what matter? There is some bright touch of color to add; a ribbon or *Croix de Guerre*. So, quite strung with medals, swinging their sticks, they may saunter up and down the main street,—greeted here and there by acquaintances—stopping to speak with each old market-woman, "*ma mère*." Or they may stop by for some *demoiselle* of the town,—the pink-cheeked *blanchisseuse* to walk out with them. Chic and pretty, with quick high-heeled little steps, she trots at the side of her soldier, proud of his shabby gray-blue.

Under the bright café awning there is a group of comrades over the glasses together. Under the white-limbed trees on the *Place*, the *poilu* does not remain long on his bench alone: brown-legged children run to his knees, pull at his coat, the better to see what ribbon he wears. He must tell them of war and the battles he's seen. A bent old man sits beside him, his brown, shrunken hand holding an ear up to listen.

Down by the shore they lounge idle among the boats,—listening to gray-haired fisher folk's tales of their fathers,



CANNES, LE PORT

jesting, teasing the red-cheeked girls, so busy mending their nets!

Out on the high, white sands, amid the usual chatter, bright colors and sunshades, here and there lie the gray-blue figures, solitary or silent, at rest in the warmth of the sun, their rough, browned hands idly playing with the sand. So they look with eyes dreamily wondering, all unaccustomed to follow the water. The water, colorful, mobile, deceptive,—always advancing, receding; rhythmic, gently it rises white from the blue, and sunlit shimmers far on the shore,—then with a soothing recurrent sound scatters foam at the idlers' feet.

AFTER THE STORM

THERE is a sea gray and wild, uneasily, restlessly moving. The waves are choppy and short, the undertone hollow and mocking, dulled in its roar. Shabby, alone, blue-clad figures stray down by the shore, drawn by the sea's savage wonder, the boom and recession of waves. They are blown by the wind as the water, and are gloomy, at one with the sea. So they look far over the dull, leaden surface, or, long in thought, to depths blue and green. Grown restless, yet their eyes are held by the water to watch yellowed crests falling unrhythmical, a light glint as of steel here and there.

AU REVOIR

THEY have been pronounced *evacués* and are eager to be off; they are restless, impatient, sewing up their uniforms, polishing their helmets,—until at length the day has come when they may go. In the wards all is in turmoil; they are aiding each other with packs and knapsacks, in haste, confused, and jesting.

"Here, here, help me to strap this."

"*Ma foi*,—but you are slow, and right clumsy too, forgotten to be a soldier, perhaps? *Laissez, laissez* then!"

"Here for the knapsack —"

"You would not forget your *Pinard* for the journey?"

"Ah, Mademoiselle, it is you I shall not forget, nor that *bon petit verre* you brought me always at night-time. Well, at home I have a *fillette* too; I shall be glad to see her, you understand." With a final satisfied shrug old Carreau hitches the heavy pack to his shoulder.

"Well, yes, you who go *en convalescence*, *bah, c'est compris*, it is two years since I have been *chez moi*." He sits quite ready for the journey, staring before him, his strong figure stooping forward. His dark eyes grown melancholy, unseeing almost, have lost, for the moment, their eagerness of anticipation. Have I not noticed that expression before? It is a look as to something clearly seen but not visualized. Now, on the day of departure, is it eagerness, restlessness for the unknown they display? Rather I think it a sufferance of it, a complete unattachment, which makes them go so easily.

With a sigh: "Well, even in the trenches, it's not so bad,

—the captain is good and kind as a father,—and then there are the comrades, a jolly family together,—"

"*Dans les tranchées*" underneath the gay words the look, I think, tells not so much of a happy return as of a march still ahead, steadily on, eyes to the front, and acceptance of the whole unknown.

"*Au front, vous savez . . .*" But why tell us more after all. Their manner, this morning, is even a bit alien, superior: they have stayed in the home we provided, they have been happy, obedient, children perhaps,—but our care cannot follow them now.

Sweetly they thank us for what we did for them here. They hardly need to tell us they have been happy, gay once more, and when they came to us so ill too! but they go "*guéris, forts.*"

Yes, truly they are changed; even little Gignon has fresh, round cheeks as well as the others. Today it is their helmets, too, I think, give them somehow a different expression: it is a stern, set look;—I wonder can they laugh just the same with that heavy strap under the chin? Yes, it must be so, for even our jolly Nanton is putting on his.

"Your *casque* becomes you, Nanton, *en effet*,—how do you like our little one in his helmet, Mademoiselle?"

"How he has polished it for the journey too, really *très chic*. I think I can even see myself in it, can you?"

One will try it, then another, where there is a bright glint on the rounded, steel surface. But even after days of careful polishing the helmets of four years campaigning will not give back quite the reflection of these laughing countenances. There is only a surface glint, even something of the sinister,—after all, it is only

steel, hard and gray and cold, blackened with many rough months' wind and weather. So it is on this gray morning of their departure we sense, perhaps, a little more keenly than we have been wont to do, that sterner reality which lies under the happier trifles of their lives spent with us,—the bare facts of their young existence,—hard and stern, inexorable,—even as those helmets, with uncompromising, hard, cold surfaces. Their handshake, too, is hard and brief, confident and assured, their words of farewell casual, carefree or resigned. They are returning to the front, to homes *en convalescence*, to their duty, the camps. After all, this has been but a resting-place, one stage on their journey. We stand at the door to say good-bye as they hurry out past us, heavy packs on their shoulders, steel on their heads, not flashing steel but *casques* of black, in this cold gray light of the morning.

"*Merci pour les bons soins,*" even at the last they do not forget to thank us for our care.

"If you ever pass through my little town, afterwards, you will let me know?"

"America?—Ah, no, that is too far."

"We are sorry to leave the comrades, the hospital, but, —ah well, *c'est la guerre.*"

Two and two, half mockingly, half seriously, they form their little line, shoulder to shoulder from our door. They are eager to be off, to be where they are not. To what far journey's end may they be moving, even as they pass so quietly, simply from our doors? Far down the road the dust whirls before them, forever shifting, blowing, . . . but where?

"Bonne Chance—Bon Voyage —"

Still little Pierre's hand lingers in ours for a longer moment. He is not *guéri*, but must go on to the next hospital for especial treatment. And he will never like any as well as this one. After all what is the use? His expression is vague, meaningless, and there is the journey which he dreads, and with his crutches.

"*Allons, courage!*" one of the comrades has swung little Pierre's heavy pack to his own shoulder, and, supporting him under the arm, they join the departing procession.

From our doorway we wave to them all:

"*Bonne Chance. Bon Voyage. Au Revoir.*" . . .

How often must that cheerful *Au Revoir* be spoken in vain. So I think as we watch them go: Laissus, stalwart and reliable, with brave, broad shoulders; Raoul, cocksure and clever with slightly swaggering gait: Caisson, *sous-officier*, a neat, trim figure,—all are now only a line, dull blue and indefinite, on the gray-white road. The light dust rises between us.

Yet, no, there is one has lingered behind the others; it is at the fence of the little house across the street. A woman in a black shawl has come out to him in the garden, and their hands meet across the low gate:

"*Au Revoir.*"

Our lives have not met again, even in thought we have been unable to follow them. Others have come, taken their places and gone as they went. Through the weeks, the months, the years, we may have little news of these wanderers on their far journeys. Still we know they have yet thought of us, as letters have come, the graceful expression of gratitude of the simple peasant soldier:

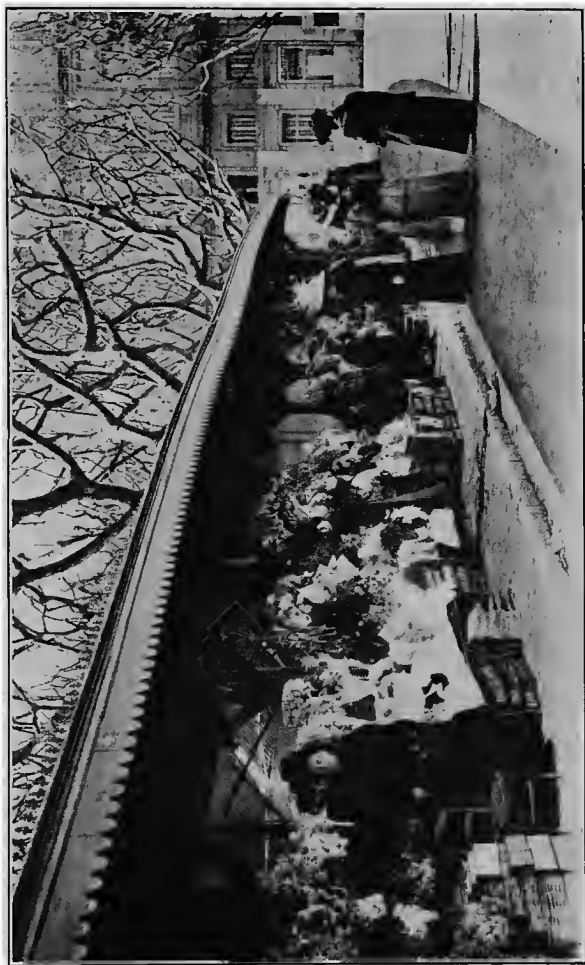
“ . . . You have with great delicacy cared for us, without preference, without thought of yourself, and in this you have replaced the mother, and the wife. But I know that your soul as your thoughts are quite above these praises, and this is why I close my letter—but your names . . . are inscribed in my heart and thoughts, and I come, and this is why I come, to beg you to communicate my thanks to the others for all their devoted care, and to tell them that I keep the best remembrance of them. I close with the hope that one day on high, *sous la bannière divine*, you will find that eternal recompense which a poor invalid, such as I, wishes you.”

AU MARCHÉ

WE must stop at the flower market, all colorful, where the papier-maché jars are daily replenished with red roses, spicy *oeillets*, Riviera flower *par excellence*, pinks and narcissus,—and violets and orange blossoms lie in profusion on the counter between. The kindly pink-cheeked flower vender in a green shawl will sell us flowers in her harsh voice “*bon marché*” for “*les soldats, qui les adorent vous savez,*” and, with a smile, there is a bunch of violets too for “*Mademoiselle l’Infirmière!*” At the market of the town we must bargain over the price of good fresh butter cut from the pat in matter-of-fact plain slices; the strengthening yellow cheese, plentiful green vegetables, red and yellow tomatoes, strawberries in season.

We must not forget to stop at the little *épicerie* in a back street, where, behind the obvious counters of dried fruits, chocolate bars and good red hams, Madame has not failed to conceal for our coming her two or three *oeufs du jour*, a rare delicacy for our *grands malades*. And it is her own white *poulets* have laid them, the same which walk under our feet on the rough board floor to pick up yellow grains which have fallen.

In the main street there is the prosperous *Epicerie Municipale* of almost pre-war prosperity, where are displayed boxes of sweet *gateaux* which invalids love, jellies and other *imports*, the strengthening *vins de Bordeaux*. A middle-aged shop-keeper waits professionally on us, while his wife and daughters are regularly called



LE MARCHÉ AUX FLEURS

down from their provincial parlor to say "*Bonjour*" to "*Mademoiselle*." They will tell you how, even in these black days, good desserts may be made with the fine Swiss *lait condensé*. They know, for they themselves must have their Sunday sweets. Shall they give you a little package extra to try for "*les blessés*"? Again, the officer son waits behind the counter to be proudly introduced to his father's customers. When peace comes he will take over the little shop, and now even he will assist to wrap a paper or adjust a string, surely too elegant to do more in his gold-braided uniform.

On the main street too are the gay crowded bazaars with their air of provincial sophistication, stocked with bright nameless knick-knacks, games and flags, camp-stools, furnishings and this and that. For our hospital purchases the calculating shop-keeper allows us just 5% off exactly: "*Voyez vous?*" It is painstakingly calculated in flourishing figures.

Two steps down from the busy sidewalk of the *rue d'Antibes* we enter the dark little *bureau de tabac*, to present for our *blessés* their "*cartes de tabac*," or to buy them the daily *Journal*. Behind the newsstand, to wait on us, there is seated a little old woman wearing a plain black bodice and white fluted collar. She sits very straight on her stool, her hands folded on the counter in front of her. Altogether she looks the very picture of decorum;—indeed one would rather expect to find her seated so on the front row of benches in the cathedral of a Sunday morning than here in her crowded *bureau de tabac*. Her large and immaculate white cap, stiff and frilled, encircles her brown immobile face with its quick

black eyes alert for the business. One after another the passers-by come in; the street-car conductor, the girl in gray shawl and gold ear-rings, the *permissionnaire* in shabby blue. They ask for the morning's *Journal*, a package of tobacco, a bit of ribbon. Yet they will stop for "*Bonjour*" with "*ma mère*" as they lay their coppers down on her counter.

Attracted by all sorts of stringed instruments in the window we went into a shop on a side street to see if there we might make the rare purchase of new records for our Victrola.

A stooping old figure stood behind the long empty counter. The old man seemed only feeble and embarrassed to have customers to wait on. And I should judge that he made his shop more of a living-room than a place of business. For there was an open fire, and two or three comfortable-looking armchairs, which took most of the room, were drawn up to the grate.

We wished to buy discs with mixed voices, for which the men at the hospital asked, we explained.

Yes, he had some, "*très jolis, très jolis.*" Shaking his old head, "Manon, Carmen . . ." he went on muttering to himself persuasively, as though in reminiscence of names long forgotten. He hobbled off. When he had brought the discs from their dusty concealment somewhere behind his counter, he asked, with a peculiar wistfulness, if we would not hear them before buying?

The one Victrola in his store he pulled to the centre of the room, and deliberately dusted it. He adjusted first one horn, then another, until he had one which suited, and carefully, lovingly, he put on his discs. Listening, he

stood, a short, stumpy figure, "drooping" were it tall enough, his head on one side with the most woe-begone expression. Never have I seen anything more melancholy than his old face with the protruding eyes and generally convex contour, the drawn and sadly reminiscent look of a face reflected on the back of a spoon. Once he brightened and straightened perceptibly as he adjusted a new disc and crooned triumphantly "Caro-ooooo-so."

"Have you ever heard Caruso sing?" I asked him. He shook his head.

"This sounds very like; I have heard him in America." He looked dumbly, unbelieving, and when I told him I would take his record at a rather high price, he merely shook his gray head as he wrapped up our purchase, looking more melancholy than ever.

With Victrola, books and games, in traveling circus fashion, we journey from one hospital to another. Each day at one o'clock I hear the usual tinkle of the horse's bell and the three peremptory blows on the horn with which Malaguti announces his arrival, and the turnout drives in at the gate. Red-faced Malaguti with the keen blue eyes will tell you how he traded his old horse, "*le pauvre bête*," with the old carriage thrown in, for this reasonably plump black horse, and the substantial victoria with white cushions. The "trade" was effected by the addition of a considerable sum of francs and sous, to be sure, as Malaguti sadly explains with much head-shaking. But this is not hard to believe when we think of the cab prices which we have paid him this winter. Malaguti is properly proud of his new "stock in trade." At every halt, be it only for a moment, the horse is carefully covered with his warm red blanket. Although on the

road it is difficult to remark his spirit, this is stoutly affirmed by his proud master, when the new and interesting possession is at a standstill, and Malaguti himself sits more firmly than ever on the box to prevent the drowsy beast from starting.

Style is all very well in its proper time and place, but in this instance it has its drawback. The halt now is not to help us with our things to or from the carriage, but to cover the horse quickly as may be with his gaudy red and yellow blanket, which is elaborately adjusted and readjusted. Even though we are standing ready on the steps the blanketing ceremony is regularly gone through with. Today, however, we are not there but waiting at the window upstairs. We watch Malaguti put on the blanket as usual, and with this extra precaution, the horse, standing in the warm sun, is soon comfortably hanging his head and in an evidently comatose condition. Since we are not even now on the steps with our belongings, Malaguti proceeds with another quite usual ceremony. He cautiously pulls a large earthenware pot from under his box seat, takes a plate, knife and napkin from under the cushions, ties the napkin firmly under his neck, sets the plate between his knees, and is soon making his meal, eating long strings of macaroni, as carelessly and comfortably as though he were at home in sunny Italy.

THE ROAD TO NICE

THE early morning tram was crowded with women returning from market, baskets on their arms, filled with green things. There was that slight odor of garlic, too slight to be offensive. And how is it they always manage to put their clumsy baskets with a "*pardon, Madame,*" just where they are not in the way, instead of where they are,—and it is always: "*B'jour, M'ssieurs, M'dames,*" and "*Au Revoir,*" though we have been casual companions on our way for the few minutes.

In the second-class compartment were an old gentleman and his *fillette*; she occupied with her bound volume and knitting, he with his *Journal*, and the brown loaf and wine from his bag, which they shared, mostly silent at noon-time. Opposite sat a mother and daughter; their hats were removed, they settled and re-settled themselves as for an all-day's journey, and then got out at the smallest station half an hour's ride down the line. Had they come from one of those little red-roofed villages among the hills, I wondered, and would they ever go as far as Nice?

All along the way the Senegalese were encamped—black soldiers in red fez caps and sashes. As one saw them here and there at some unexpected turn of the road, guarding a bridge, driving a mule team, they gave an extra touch of color, a picturesqueness, a certain savagery to this already rugged landscape.

Those red-roofed villages among the gray-green of the

hills blaze out like a bit of flame, or like our maple-groves in autumn. The old red-roofed town or Roman remain seems now quite as much a part of the landscape as the red rocks and the sea which has fashioned them, the sea that I watched swirling there among the rocks below, in all the deepest, clearest shades of greens and blues and purest amber. Far out over the surface, there was that softer, silver light with sudden and mysterious changes to pink, to opalescent, and, deepening with the setting sun, the brilliance of sky and sea were reflected, soft and evanescent, in the snow on the mountain-tops.

Gradually we came into a more settled part of the coast, the Riviera one is accustomed to hear about, with here and there a watering-place—a mere collection of strangely shaped walls and spires, a painted city in silhouette against the evening sky.

The precise little waiter in a shabby dress-suit hovered over us with great solicitude and changed our plates with unfailing attention and extraordinary rapidity,—four courses and a sweet desert,—remarkable for war times.

The two gentlemen opposite, conspicuous for their black whiskers and civilian clothes, were unusually gay and loquacious. They had evidently had a most satisfactory afternoon at the Casino, and this evening everything seemed to please them. They told us that the war would probably be ended in another eight days.

"You should have seen the crowd at Monte Carlo this afternoon," they said, "and you could not doubt it, everyone so gay and running out of the rooms all the time to look at the bulletin boards."

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

I CARRIED their morning *Journal* from bed to bed, as usual. To-day it contained rare good news—the first word of surrender on the Austrian front. Garreau, flushed and inarticulate, danced in bed on his crutches. Some lay in dumb, unspeaking rows; I felt a sort of hard indifference. Then, standing between two of our seriously wounded poilus, I saw tears in old Esteffe's eyes:

“So there will be Peace,” he said, “surely it should make the world very happy—but can Peace, more than that *Médaille Militaire* there at my bed-post, restore his leg to the father of a family?”

Young Gilbert on the next bed, *grand blessé*, turned to him a pale, sweet face that lay weak on the pillow:

“What wounds matter now?” said the boy of twenty.

LE JOUR DE GLOIRE

THE men have brought into the gray hospital hallway baskets of greens and bright flowers still found here and there in the neglected, overgrown garden. All who are able, are today dressed in full soldier's uniform, shabby, maybe, but complete.

The sturdy Laffitte stands on the stepladder below the chandelier, with his one arm throwing over it festoons of green, or carefully adjusting the flowers handed him by his comrades below.

"Laffitte, you with your one arm must arrange,—you are not a gardener's son for nothing: *voyez, voyez comme il a du gout!*"

The sick and wounded are brought down from the wards, and their long chairs and beds placed about the side of the hall. They have a wondering, happy look as though brought suddenly into a new little world of light and color.

A lady is there to play the piano, and the party begins with Chopin and a somewhat too classical flavor. Then I am requested to start up the Victrola with anything lively, and to keep it going! The men sing and whistle in accompaniment to the popular French Victory March. Then comes Guerrin, the cook's, contribution; the little kitchen boys come in, in long white aprons, hair brushed for the occasion, carrying trays of conventional-looking pastry, which turn out to be the most surprising and delicious cream-puffs. Guerrin appears in the background,—we have never seen him out of the kitchen before, and here

he looks quite different and shy, not efficient and commanding, as in his own smoky domain of bright kettles below. Soon he is discovered and dragged to the centre of the hall and thanked for the treat he provided. He pushes aside all who surround him, and switches his apron over his arm,—always, with him, a preliminary to action, whether it be to snatch the roast from the oven or administer a box on the ear to the smallest kitchen boy. So now he declares himself in his own manner:

“*Messieurs, Mesdames*, it is quite true. Never, no never before have I made you cream-puffs for the hospital,—and never, absolutely never shall I do so again,—but just this once, it is for *la Victoire!*”

There is a moment's silence while Guerrin steps back, red and shy, and twirling a lock of his neatly-brushed hair in some embarrassment, almost wishing he had not spoken.

Then, amid amused giggles from the little kitchen boys, the Director leads in the hand-clapping: “Three times three for Guerrin, the Cook!” The men warm to the occasion; again it is “Three times three” for the party, the infirmières—the hall resounds with the strong, rhythmical clapping: 123-45! 123-45! It is clap, clap, clap—clap, clap!

We carry around hot chocolate and lemonade and the men pull out their tin cups, *quarts*, in the language of the trenches; every properly equipped *poilu* on any occasion, especially a social one, is armed with his *quart*. Though the drink is not the traditional *Pinard* it seems to quite revive the spirits of the party, and from now on the men take their entertainment into their own hands. When he is really happy and festive the *poilu* becomes

dramatic—one of the soldiers has got up at the end of the hall and is reciting a patriotic war poem; another follows and then another. . . .

In an obscure corner the old Serbian soldier has tucked his violin under his chin and put his bow to the strings for the first squeaky notes of the "*Marseillaise*." All eyes turn slowly, in some surprise, to the quiet old stranger among us. The indefinite, bent, old figure in the shabby uniform seems to unroll and straighten, magically, there before our eyes, until he looks like some proud old seer. The eyes grow bright with a far-away, rapt expression. What he is actually doing with his arms and the squeaky notes from the violin, seem quite separate from the intent and inspired personality. He puts his violin aside with a sweeping gesture,—and, saluting gravely, cries:

"Vela Francuska!"

One song or recital follows another, about the poilu on permission, the poilu dying on the field, songs pathetic or gay as the case may be. The most popular is the song of Madelon, the pretty peasant girl who carries wine and bread to the soldiers:

"Madelon, Madelon, Madelon!"

The tune rises on jubilant, strong voices and gradually seems to swell into that universal chorus in which to-day the men's voices drown out all the others—

*"Allons enfants de la patrie
Le jour de gloire est arrivé."*

L'OUVRIER

It was one of those inconveniently long cases, only a little incipient lung trouble, really, made it necessary for him to remain in this warmer climate. I saw him first lounging about the hospital hall; he was restlessly rolling and lighting cigarettes and talking with two of the scrub-women. They went their way with words and laughter, and he lounged over to where I was sitting.

"*Bonjour*, have you perhaps a piece of American chewing-gum, Mademoiselle?"

"What beggars!" I thought when I was tired. Yet when I looked up there was something so peculiarly winning, tantalizing, even, about the frank smile,—well one could easily understand his way with women of his class. With quick sensitiveness, he was already half apologetic.

"American chewing-gum is so good," he explained, besides he was too restless and nervous to smoke much, then too it wasn't good for his athletics.

"You are a sportsman?"

Well, yes, sport had always been his distraction, his amusement for *passer le temps*." I had noted his athletic build; he was on a peculiarly large scale for one of his nationality. Yes, swimming, water sports were his specialty. He would go up to Paris in the spring for the *Courses*. He sat down then on the edge of the table and told me more about himself; he'd been five years at the front,—the front-line trenches, too, where he'd worked establishing telegraphic communications, and all that time he'd never been wounded either. It was only while play-

ing on General Petain's foot-ball team against the English his knee had received injury.

"Voilà de la chance!"

Happy miracle indeed that he had escaped like this, strong of limb and young! I had to think how handsome he looked in the poilu's blue uniform as he sat nonchalantly on the edge of the table, and swung his legs, and laughed so easily, tossing back his head.

After this he came often to talk at odd moments, and with ready humor to tell of what he did. He had been swimming down by the *Croisette*,—it was very gay with everyone there to watch the bathers these first warm days. Again he came from distributing the mail, from walks with pretty *demoiselles* in town. He was sent, one day, with a detachment of Annamites, who knew no French, to conduct them safely to their *dépôt* quite down the line; "droll little dolls," he called them. He had to leave them in the train a moment to buy their wine for lunch, and when he came back again the train had started, and so they went without him. Should he travel after them, then, like any nurse in Paris,—an old nurse with white cap and strings? But what a joke! He laughed, unruffled by the misadventure, rolling his cigarettes, leisurely.

Frequently he brought clippings from the paper in which he traced the week's swimming matches, the schedules for the Spring *Courses* and the part he would take in them. One day he came waving an open letter over his head in his careless, gay fashion:

"Mademoiselle, to-day I have something really interesting to show you, that is I think you will be interested,—since you have allowed me to tell you a little of myself and my life. I sent home for these prints and snapshots, not

much, little things I took with my own Kodak at the front,—I have not told you much of my life there, have I? Well, you see these pictures were taken in winter,—see the snow so deep on the ground, and here is my poor horse, yes, shot under me while I on his back was saved. And there am I, say, would you know me really, with all that wire about me? It is so I went from post to post along the front. And the ditch you see, half filled with snow, it is where I lived. See how cosily it is all arranged. Here I have another view of the inside and the way we fixed it all up, photographs on the wall too, do you see? And these good soldiers, all sitting by the fire and smoking together, they are my comrades. Ah, yes, Mademoiselle, life changes; can you distinguish the wire in the picture, and the little cross on the snow, and see the tall man with his back toward you? It is I at the grave of my friends.”

His face had changed,—all the light, mobile gayness gone out of it, and I noticed in him for the first time that underlying look of utter disillusionment, a sweet, old sadness. One rarely fails to discover it in the youngest of these soldiers of France.

“I am no longer young,” he said it with the simplicity of a child, the barest statement, as though divining my thoughts. “You see I am like this, Mademoiselle, I cling very much to those I have known, and those I have always known especially. My youth, I think, has gone with those I loved. My cousin and I played together as children, at school, always . . . he was with me at the front,” he put his hands before his eyes as though to shut out what he would not see. . . .

“This was with me in the trenches, too,” mechanically

he took from his pocket a shabby little red leather frame and held it toward me; a girl's face, with finely marked contour, arched eyebrows and full sweet lips, surely a face about which one could imagine,—I had but a glance. "Your *marraine*?" I ventured.

"My fiancée," his strong hands encircled the little frame firmly,—his own broader lines were so fine in their way. And so he continued to sit, his head bent forward in the same position, immobile, his eyes on the face. "Sweet, eh? I don't know if you will understand, but really it wasn't the war I have told you about, not the war at all and what I did, was my life those years in the trenches. Do you know how it is when things go on about you, and yet they're not real? So it was with the days out there, one passed another, but they were not real. No, it was she—just she and the letters she sent, and thinking of the little home I should have with her, happy and secure afterward. You know often I felt that I was the more to her, too, because she had just me,—she was *orpheline*, her poor mother dead and not much known in the *quartier*,—and of her father, well, she never knew anything. She lived alone with the aunt, the mother's sister, and didn't even go with the other girls much. She seemed to me always the prettiest, so sweet and shy, and different."

His eyes challenged my sympathy. "I am sorry, how did it happen?"

"The cold, probably, it was hard and severe those winters, and she—*toujours un peu délicat, vous savez*. It was not only my strong young comrades at the front I lost. And when I got home in the spring,—no, I am not at all *dévo*t, I tell you,—I saw no justice. I would not think

that the good God had willed it so, like my little sainted mother, at home. And yet when she took me in her arms and comforted me, I think I loved her twice as much. No, I am not at all *croyant*, I can tell you, but I believe that the *Sainte Vierge* was a woman, and so there are some . . . Ah, well, there are always plenty of others . . . ”

Linette, the pretty red-cheeked *blanchisseuse*, went by, her empty basket balanced jauntily on her hip,—and he pulled at her skirts a little. The day's work was done. What wonder if they walked late hand in hand down through the palm gardens; another couple out by the sea. There were plenty of others strolling there. These nights were made for such things.

* * * * *

“Still, I cannot live with the Dead, can I?”

“I did not mean that,—you will yet be happy, you must look forward, surely.”

“Pah! none of these women would satisfy me,—where do you think I might find one like her? Not in France, to-day, *certes!* For the rest, it is only a dream, youth, happiness, security,—”

“And yet you are not sick enough either, if you could really go to work now,—”

“Why, there are always little things I can do here, get the mail, make myself useful, no one wants me to go—” there was a slow reproach in his voice,—“still, yes, in that you are right, too, I have all my life to remake, and then my task waits, my profession,—” the mobile face lit to the words.

“Tell me about it, what do you do?”

“*Forgerer,—construction navale,*—I do not feel that I have lost my aptitude too greatly either. Yes, I know

I shall be happy when I see the sparks fly again from the anvil, and with all my strength and spirit bent to the work,—I shall be able to forget," he laughed in real abandon,—“why I might even forget that I am just a being tossed about here at Life's every whim and pleasure, in the joy I feel when the iron bends to my will.” He laughed again, a little bitterly. “I am a workman, and have no art for saying things; I speak only according to my thoughts. Well, you see, it is this way, the iron I can always hammer and bend and shape, well, as I could not shape my life, somehow.”

PART II.

FRENCH COLONIALS

A NEW LANGUAGE

THE BLACK from Madagascar had not spoken for several days even in those poor muffled sounds which he knew. He merely lay weak, inexpressive; his round black face covered with perspiration and the prominent black eyes bulging. Suddenly he motioned, violently, and murmured strange words: at first we could not understand,—then I followed his poor straining eyes that looked out to sea, and noted the undulating movement of the thin hand. "*Poisson?*" I asked. "*Ah, oui.*" For the first time in many days he grinned and showed the white teeth. Since then I have found that many of these Colonials have an intense longing to eat of fresh fish, before they die.

Though there be many tongues among us we have a common language,—it is easy to understand: sure, neat accents of confident cheer, soft slurring words of comfort, brusque jokes of the trenches, broken, yearning syllables of the stranger. Or it is a cry of human pain, the sigh of relief, quick, transforming laughter; a look of sympathy, understanding: French? Sometimes I wonder. At any rate it is the language of this little hospital of France.

The man from Tunisie has such a sweet, lonely face that it is impossible not to stop and talk with him as I pass his bed in the ward. He talks in his language, I in mine, and yet we can somehow each understand the other. I know perfectly well that he is telling me how warm the sun is in Tunisie,—and how he had not

been out for a very long time to walk in the garden here, and that he is getting weaker with each day; but perhaps if he could have some sweet little *gateaux* to eat they would make him feel better. All that I can do is to say something cheerful in a strange tongue, and he smiles and knows perfectly well that by night he will have his macaroons!

THE BULL-FIGHTER

"67" is an ex-bull-fighter, native of Guadaloupe. His has been a splendid physique, a long strong body; the frame is all too evident now and faded hollows where the black, hard flesh has been.

The comrade who comes daily to sit by the sick-bed of his compatriot shakes his head sadly: "Is it possible that this disease of a foreign land can do so, and in his own country how strong he was! a man stronger than other men and more daring than the beasts!"

I try to picture him a bull-fighter in some far southern country, his old strength restored, doing triumphant battle in the arena in all the pride of physical combat before the colorful and noisy crowd.

Far removed from the arena, the shrunken frame on the white hospital cot is undergoing a mortal struggle with an enemy more insidious and deadly than he has known in his strongest day. And there is only a woman in soft white garments and a foreign voice which speaks a quiet encouragement now and then, to witness his contest. Surely this is different from the old days, a dreamy look in the tired eyes seems to say, in those easier moments between the gaspings for breath, or after some painful paroxysm. What is the fight and struggle for? Life, or something darker and more difficult? On the whole it is toward Life. How he wants to live! Some of his old physical courage and tenacity, and life, the sheer love of living, is there after all. The difficult night passed, each day with the returning sunlight he

motions to have his cot turned so that he may look out over the sea as it sparkles under his window. Flowers placed in a vase at his bedside do not long remain there. His large hand closes tenaciously over the green growing things, until its grasp relaxes on the warm stems in sheer feebleness, or the forgetfulness of sleep. The taste of sweet southern fruits or of sugars is still good, or that of little fish caught fresh from the sea nearby. He can no longer raise himself unaided in bed, but it distresses him to accept assistance. Under his direction two strong ropes are fastened to the iron bed-posts at his feet. The large wasted hands grasp the rope, and, with an effort, pull the great frame into an upright position. This is a rare triumph now, and he will smile though his head droop forward when it is done.

It is quite too much effort to talk, although he knows some of our language. But there is one word which never fails him, and this and the patient smile meet every circumstance of his present condition. Each time that he eats or drinks, every time that the pillows are rearranged, he speaks distinctly, though it be slowly, even with an effort, "*Merci.*"

. . . Were there no messages written or unwritten,—had he no family in his own country? the infirmière questioned the dusky companion as they watched together by the bed. No, he had no family; he was different, after all, even at home only a bull-fighter.

The lips on the pillow moved—we bent over him to catch the meaning—" *Merci.*" So graciously, gently the Islander from overseas gave his rude life in France.

FRIEND TO THE CANNIBAL

HE is tame and ordinary, this cannibal, well-fed, black, square and gentle as he sits in Colonial uniform holding the hand of my patient, while they talk in their incessant chatter. He seems more like a caricature than my patient, this cannibal's friend, in clean white, erect in his bed, with his glossy face always amused and the large bulging black eyes.

He never tires of telling all about himself in rapid French, accompanied always with chuckles. "Where is he from?" He tells me an unpronounceable land—what matter? He is forty years old with grown-up daughters at home, blacker than he himself probably,—at all events they're "*très jolies*." He has never got to the front, but is ill, very ill, of the wound in his foot where he struck it one day with a shovel. "Hear it? *et ça fait toujours zip—zip*." "See it?" He will pull away the bed-clothes forty times a day to show you. Otherwise he rarely moves at all excepting his outspread black hands, and the bobbing woolly head.

"The Doctor said you could walk if you wished; you should try crutches."

"Why, no, Mademoiselle, never in my own country have I used them, and do you think that God has abandoned me entirely, that I should begin here?"

Again, I would wash his head. But it is as ever, "Oh, *non, non, non, non*," in the rising negative chuckle. No one has washed his head before with warm water, and it might possibly change all the color of his hair.

After bed-making, I bring him the newspaper, and, while I dust, he reads aloud to the devoted cannibal and me, following with his black pointing finger. It seems he must know by heart now the costumes of Mrs. Wilson, but there are always new ones to read of, when she is received by the queens of Italy, Belgium and England.

Daily then, he writes letters in a neat flowing hand, and directs one to the head of the

Service de Santé.

The gracefully flowing lines complain that he's kept too long here in hospital. It is outrageous, abominable; what is he doing here? Two months ago even he should have taken ship home.

A second letter he gracefully addresses to

Mademoiselle l'Infirmière

He assures her that her care for him could not be better than it is. He thanks her, and all his kind nurses for the excellent treatment provided, ill as he is in their hospital.

Finally one day his plea to the *Service de Santé* is answered, and he is at last *evacué*.

"I am going today, home to my country, and I shall not see you again until we meet in the sky."

I asked him whether he thought we should recognize each other at once? I was trying to picture him, mentally, wearing wings and a halo instead of his traveling outfit of the broad-brimmed sombrero and baggy blue. His answer, flavoring somewhat of missionary teachings,

was yet rather touching. "We should know each other," he said, "because, there, all are brothers and sisters—but I shall have to be so very good to get in." He has entertained the cannibal and me with stories of his rather questionable life at home. "Mademoiselle, if you should see me trying to get in, that is just a devil, will you come and save me?"

Who knows at what far stage of our journey may we not all meet again—the Cannibal, his Friend, and I?

TAHITIANS

To those of us who knew these gentle Islanders, under the common roof of this hospital of France, their memory remains sweet, gentle, like their own personalities, any thought of them simple, yet peculiarly poignant.

How could we forget them? Even as they came here among soldiers from many corners of the globe, a small detachment of the army of France, they remained singularly themselves. They have not mingled with the others, they brought with them their own customs and formalities. They clung to each other, a dependent little band, in some things as removed from European custom as in a native grove of their own distant island.

With the strong warm strain of more primitive island blood, they seem to have inherited also affection and appreciation simple as a child's, with manners gentle and and vague. In outward appearance they are all singularly alike, graceful and picturesque, with nut-brown skins and dark, liquid eyes. Only the differing contour of the faces, and the characteristic shape of the eyes, denote the intermingling of foreign blood, Chinese, Japanese, English, Spanish, American.

I had only known Tahiti as a tiny dot on the map, in the blue expanse of the Pacific, until I saw it enlarged in the drawing of a green water-color island in a pretty hand-made map on the bare wall of the hospital ward. Our brown-skinned patients would often look up at it, and tell how they had come all the way over that Sea, and then across a continent and another Sea,—how far away



A TYPICAL TAHITIAN SOLDIER

it was! And here they lay ill in hospital for weeks and months, often without ever having reached the real end and aim of the long journey; or else they were here only for a shorter period of days or weeks, to regain strength in this warmer climate, before being sent again to their ranks for the next offensive.

Their illness was diagnosed lung trouble,—and yet it was not quite the well-known illness either; the clever little Doctor with sharp eyes and pointed beard would shake his head even over the simplest complaint or operation. Did he fully understand, as what European could, these lithe brown bodies from a different climate and condition?

You have never puzzled over the names on those temperature charts above the beds; if you had, you would not wonder that we knew our Tahitians more familiarly by number. There are Muehumua a Etaeta, Faatito a Metua, Joseph Tetuarahi and many more: “43,” “56,” “57,” and all the others, they lay much of the time mere breathing forms, asleep under white sheets, even their heads under the bedclothes, to keep out the air, which in this southern country yet seemed to them chilly. They were willing to be disturbed at meal-times; however, when their heads would come out, like so many turtles’, for a hot sweet drink, or the native meal of rice and fruits. So we came to know them, and the numbers gained individual significance.

Pehe’s head was seen more often than the others, for the Doctor ordered for “56” liquids at frequent intervals. Besides, “56” was sociable and quite willing to be disturbed. His round face and eyes wore a bland smile cheerful enough when we called him, but just the same he

would not touch the good French *tisanes* and teas provided. Use a good portion of American sugar in tea or lemonade, however, and the Tahitian will drink almost anything.

Maitia a Maitia suffered more than the others: lungs, heart, throat, intestines, and in all the heavy limbs. He would sometimes slip his hand around to the back of the nurse who was doing his *friction*, and stroke it, a feeble attempt at rubbing, and ask:

"Whirohi, Maman?" (tired?)

And when she came in with oranges and other things she had been out to buy he was the only one to shake his head and say,

"The basket was very heavy."

"57," with long gaunt face and hair brushed straight up in front, presented on his well days a positively bristling appearance, due, I suppose, to the greater energy employed in hair-brushing. "57" had an almost continual cheerfulness and accompanying grin. So he had an unfailing interest in his progress, but none the less in his relapses. He inquired each morning as to just what he might eat: what would do him the most good today? Everything which he got, however, was for the best. Smiling broadly, he sat in readiness for the tray which was brought him:

"Vous faites bien le manger."

On the fever days he studied the eccentric lines on his temperature chart and talked of his diet with an ever greater care. One day he became so weak that he was given up by the Doctor, and the Priest was sent for, while "57" took, as we all thought, his last communion. For some days he lay on the verge of unconsciousness

and one could do little for him but take him milk from time to time; then he asked for fruit.

"He may have anything which will please him these last days."

"57" ate the sweet fruit with sugar as though he were starving and called for more. From that hour his strength returned. "A resurrection," superstitious Madame l'Infirmière called it. "57" seemed to regard it all as more of a joke than anything else, from the way he grinned again at her, and, in fact, at everything. He took a renewed interest in his temperature chart, but particularly in his meals, and sat up in bed, even, wearing his soldier's cap, and sewing the holes in his uniform. Such erratic relapses and recoveries were not unusual. The Doctor would often shake his head, but make no comment.

These dark-skinned Islanders received their share of that same sympathy and cheer which the kind French townspeople provided their own Poilus of France. The white-haired old *dames infirmières* could not treat their own sons more kindly. The soldier, of whatever race or color, was to them just "*mon petit*,"—They would pet and mother them sweetly, but these brown faces were too often unresponsive.

"Qu'est-ce qu'il a?"

Perhaps it is not easily cured, a poignant homesick longing and heartache.

Even among themselves these simple people are often uncommunicative. In the wards they lie weak and quiet, sad, but peacefully resigned.

What of religious observance the adventurous Protestant preachers have taught them in their far country they

have brought back in their own manner to a more Catholic, irreverent France. Each morning the Tahitians have prayers; their Deacon, Maiturai, stands in the center of the white hospital ward. He holds his tall figure beautifully erect, now he is majestic rather than graceful, the long dark face and features serious and noble. His hands are folded on his chest, he is not looking up for inspiration, but down, as though awaiting the Stoic's strength which comes from within. He is speaking in a deep foreign voice with intense earnestness and the men in bed have folded their hands on the white covers and are lying with closed eyes,—the worn features relaxed, serenely resigned.

The function next in order and importance to prayers is that of washing. At any time of the day or night they may bathe in the tepid rivers and lakes at home. Here they revel in running water,—or they carry it, great basins full, to the comrades who must remain in bed.

Those who are well enough to be up are not content with the half attire of the Frenchmen. They must be dressed in the full brown uniform of their regiment, and yet there is nothing of *chic* about their clothes. These are worn modestly, loosely, even as their movements are graceful but indefinite and easy. They will hardly consider themselves completely dressed unless they wear also a rose behind one ear or both. "Do you know the significance of a white flower worn over the ear?" Rupert Brooke wrote from Tahiti. "A white flower over the right ear means 'I am looking for a sweetheart.' And a white flower over the left ear means 'I have found a sweetheart.' And a white flower over each ear means 'I have one sweetheart, and am looking for another,' A

white flower over each ear, my dear, is dreadfully the most fashionable way of adorning yourself in Tahiti."

The flowers which they love to pick in the garden here are for gifts and little ceremonies. They make flower wreaths, or *lais*, to crown one of their number who has just arrived or is leaving, while if a man is sick or suffering his friends keep flowers by his bed, or hang him a pretty *lais* to look at. Little Tai with the mischievous restless eyes and the pleasing manners will hand us a rose often in saying "*Bonjour*" or "*Bonsoir, Demoiselle.*" If we will come to Tahiti he will provide us also with a fat little pig for our welcome.

Pouroto, with the matter-of-fact, round face, and the rounder black eyes, even with a temperature of 103 sits smiling and bland, but always impatient for his well days, when he may get up and be dressed in his bright pink shirt and sweep the ward until it shall be as shining and clean as himself. For the rest he will wait on his sick comrades, except on Sundays when he walks out to town, his shoes tied with large bows of raffia.

From his first Sunday out with the Frenchmen, Tahiri returned, walking oddly enough, his arms hanging stiff by his coat, sliding by us without even a greeting. But when he came out from his room again, swinging his arms, the little mother infirmière guessed quickly enough.

"But surely you have already had enough, Tahiri, why hide the bottles?"

Obediently he gave them up for safe-keeping, yet started out to town again that same evening. She ran after him then and beckoned him back, and when she had laid her hand gently on his arm, hanging his head Tahiri returned with her. "*J'avais oublié à toi,*" he said; some-

how he had reckoned without his host. And that night, standing in stockinged feet in the hall Tahiri uttered this final declaration of dependence:

"Toi bonne pour les Tahitiens, moi plus sortir, moi rester." For thee I shall stay because thou art good to my brothers.

In all things the Tahitians cling to each other. Do something for one and they all will be grateful. Those who are able to be up would yet rather be near the comrades who must remain in bed. They do not go out to seek company elsewhere. Here they have their own occupations. Some sit cross-legged on the floor, busy over basket-making, weaving bright-colored raffia and straw. They are easily entertained, amused as children at their games together.

Terimana adopted a little yellow-haired doll which he begged from the basket of a kind visiting lady who would have carried it to the orphanage next door. But no little girl could mother this little plaything more tenderly than Terimana. He props it up with a picture book to look at, after smoothing its clothes with the greatest care, and covers it carefully with tarlatan so that the flies shall not annoy it, and puts it to bed when he leaves the room, in his own big bed, the tiny yellow head well in the middle of the bolster which is all the soldiers are allowed as a pillow.

The Tahitians like to read children's fairy tales, *Contes de Fées*, but other books and newspapers rarely interest. Bright pictures amuse them, and our Victrola will keep them happy for hours. The language of color and music is the surest one, after all, with a primitive-minded people; better than mere colorless



"ILS PENSENT EN LEUR PAYS"

words, though the meaning be ever so kindly. They are interested in the Victrola music partly because it is American.

"America is near Tahiti?" they question confidently. And then, "What are the songs the American soldiers sing?" How they enjoy the lilt of *Over There* and *Johnny Get Your Gun*. But among the records brought from America those which they especially love are the Hawaiian tunes, like their own music, weird and strange. "Like home," they tell us.

Often it seems that a pall of silence, a mysterious hush, falls on the entire ward. The weaker comrades sleep quietly under close-rolled sheets, and I wonder if they dream the better, so, of their own green island across the sea? The group of convalescents sitting round-shouldered on the lounge are silent, motionless. Their arms are wound about each other, while, large-eyed, they gaze wistfully before them through puffs of blue cigarette smoke—thinking? of what? I wonder—

The cheerful little French nurse bustles in to see her charges. Puzzled, she looks from one to the other and shakes her head:

"Ils ne s'amusez plus,—ils rêvent et pensent à leur pays."

MOOHONO'S JOURNEY

HE sits erect in bed solemn, unsmiling, expressionless; taking no interest in anything. He is unaffected even by the petting of the fussy old Madame, who would so like to see him happy,—“*le pauvre petit, si laid.*” Moohono is ugly, with his bristling black hair, his large dark, protruding eyes, the prominent teeth, and a small nose in a face which so often appears all flat and expressionless. Yet his forehead is beautiful,—high and broad, expressive even; with much of thought and benign serenity in its classic physical contour.

What he thinks, it is not easy to know. Even with his comrades he does not chatter much, and they will shake their heads over him often, and tell us a little, now this, now that, about their comrade, Moohono. He is so changed,—of course they knew him in Tahiti. He lived in Papeete and was employed in a bank, while they are from the country where they have worked on their plantations, cultivating the *vanille*. They think Moohono is richer than they and knows more, probably. Unlike the others, he knows French well, and yet he speaks with us but seldom, and then as though it were but another physical exertion, in briefest words of oracular solemnity. Again, in pure mischief, he will chatter in queer, sudden sounds to fussy old Madame l'Infirmière.

He plays her tricks too, and jumps at her from behind his pillow when she comes with the *soupe*. Or he makes funny faces when she enquires so very expressly for his health.

"Talking, talking,—why is the woman forever talking?"

I laid a picture puzzle on the sheets in front of Moohono, and methodically, unthinkingly, he began to fit the intricate pieces together. When he found that he had made a picture of the Seine, the boats and the crowds on the *quais*, there was a gleam in his eyes for the first time in many weeks.

As methodically and slowly, unthinkingly almost, as Moohono fits the intricate pieces of a puzzle, one to another, he gets up, dresses, and makes his bed. Then he dusts about the room slowly, bending painfully, gasping for breath when these morning tasks are done. He goes out regularly to sit in his *chaise longue* in the sun. His cane taps before him the painfully measured steps as he walks to the garden.

The kind little Doctor is pleased with Moohono's progress.

"Hardly sick enough for hospital now; what, *mon brave*? There will be a boat for Tahiti soon, and would you not be glad to go home?" Moohono only looks at him sadly, unbelieving.

"Tahiti? *c'est loin*," was all he said; for some days more silent than ever. Then,—"Well, yes,—if I might just go to Paris, now I am in France."

"Of course, the *dépôt* is there."

As the time drew near for him to go, Moohono packed and repacked his knapsack, reassorting his scanty belongings. For several days I noticed him busy over arranging and rearranging cards in a postal-card album. When it was done he handed me the book.

"I may take it to look at?"

He shook his head. "To keep," he said.

"But these cards are from your friends, your country." Moohono merely smiled wearily,—*"to keep,"* and would hear no more about it. For old Madame l'Infirmière Moohono had a parting gift too. It was a queer-looking dried brown ear of something.

"For cakes," he explained, with a grin, to her who cooked for him daily.

At the mention of Paris, Moohono would slowly smile; this, and not his green distant island, seemed now the end and aim of his journey. What has Paris not meant to young dreamers, adventurers, wanderers, throughout the centuries? Even Rousseau had left the rural delights of Chambéry to go on foot to the city of adventure. Casanova in Venice had dreamed of the women of France and had followed his dream to Paris. Paris, familiarly "*Paname*" to the poilus, has been for them a place to go in gay companies together, for a few days permission, frolic and cinema. But what, I wondered, could the gray city mean to quiet little strangers like Moohono, who went there alone in these dark days? Anyway, he should have with him warm slippers for his feet, a good stock of cakes and other sweets, a warm blanket for the journey.

After an anxious delay, we had news of him, but the letter did not come from Paris. The poor little traveler had merely changed one hospital for another.

Nogent sur Marne le 8, 8, '18.

Na Mama iti

E Mama iti e

Ua tae mai nei ta oe rata iti

e ua mauruuru roa vau ia oe

Te faalte atu nei au ia oe e

ua tauli hia (changer) tou

To little Mother

Oh, little Mother

Thy little letter arrived and

I thank thee very much. I

make known to thee that my

hospital is changed; now one

fare mai; i teie nei hoe a (meme) to matou fare mai Muehumua eo Mauati.

E Hopital ino roa teie, mea rahi roa te Senegalais e te maa aita e maitai; eita vau e hinaaro e faaea iunei, c'est trop degoutant parce que les Senegalais cratchent partout; on ne voit aucun francais dans cet Hopital il n'y a rien que des coloniales comme les Malgaches, Marocains, Anamites et Senegalais mea ino roa.

I teie mea maitai rii au terara mea paruparu (faiblesse) Aita roa tu e parau api; je suis dans les bois de Nogent; il n'y a personne ici pas meme un chat.

Aroha oe ia Miss N. nou, Mlle. C. e pauroa te mau vahine tuati

Tirara parau
Ia orana
Na to oe tamarii ino
Moohono.

and the same the hospital of Muehumua and Mauati.

This hospital is very bad, the Senegalese are very numerous and the food is not good; I do not wish to remain here, it is too disgusting because the Senegalese spit everywhere. One sees no Frenchmen in this hospital; there are only Colonials as Malgaches, Marocains, Anamites and Senegalese, very bad.

Now I am a little better, and my weakness is ended. There is no other news; I am in the woods at Nogent; there is no one here, not even a cat.

Greet thou Miss N. from me, Mlle. C. and all the nurses—

Finished talking.
Greetings.
From thy bad boy
Moohono.

Nogent sur Marne, le 16, 8, 18.
Ma chère Mama:

Ua tae mai ta oe Carte iti i ananahi i te poipoi e ua mauruuru iti roa vau; i teie nei ua huru maitai au area ra mea paruparu roa tou avae; e piti mau ionei hoe Fei no te Salle I. Muehumua oe Mauati ua reva raua i te Dépot.

Ua aui mai nei oe iau ahiri a faaea vau i Paris aore e hoi faahau i Cannes; aita roa tu vau i ite te teai noa nei. Quand j'aurais la reponse je vous écrirai tout de suite.

Ma chère Mama:

Thy little card arrived yesterday morning and I was very pleased; now I am a kind of better, but very weak in my legs; two of us here, one man from Salle I. M. and M. have both left for the Depot.

Thou hast asked me if I remain in Paris or return again to Cannes; I know nothing about it, I only wait. When I shall have the reply I shall write you right away. I have

Aita roa tu tau e parau rahi
ia papai atu; eiaha oe e pea-
pea ia'u.

Tirara parau
Aroha atu i te mau Vahine
tuati
Ia ora na oe e Mama iti
Na ta oe Tamarii ino
Moohono.

not much to write; be not
thou vexed with me.

Finished speaking.
Greetings to all the nurses.
Greetings to thee, little
mother
From thy bad boy,
Moohono.

In the compartment of a slow omnibus train a French lady noticed a sick Tahitian boy crouched in the corner of his seat. Could she do anything for him, she asked; where was he going, what was his destination? The Colonial soldier was gloomily unresponsive. Finally he looked at her with round, solemn eyes and spoke in oracular syllables:

"Je viens de Marseilles; je vais mourir à Cannes, je serais bien soigné là."

The nurse stooped to wash the long black feet, tired from their journey.

"This is better than Paris, for here there is hot water and a Maman," he said.

She unpacked his knapsack, taking out the soft, felt slippers, given him at parting. "Clean as when I gave you them! Then you have been either in bed or in your boots,—tell me where you have been, my Moohono?" There was a gleam of the old mischief in the dark eyes: "*Ce n'étaient pas des Hôpitaux,*" was all he said. For a moment, only, Moohono was responsive, then, coughing, he settled weakly to sleep.

For many weeks Moohono lay on his former bed in hospital, but I hardly knew him there. His old individuality seemed quite gone, crushed. The brown face was no

longer mischievous, but had an expression indeterminate, sweet. The thinned black hair glistened like a halo about the olive-brown face.

Moohono, *soldat Tahitien*, is dead in hospital. The little group of compatriots have placed bright flowers at the head and foot of the dark board coffin. Always one of them watches beside it. To-day they have draped the coffin in the tricolor, and themselves carry it into the hall where the last services are held.

The old French Protestant minister in his correct black frock coat and gray pointed beard and friendly round spectacles, looks incongruously like some foreign and good little sprite, speaking there among the tall solemn Islanders with bent stoical heads. Yet the gentle French language has never sounded more gracious than now, in the sweet simple words the *pasteur* has chosen. He praises the young soldier who has journeyed so far, and who has died as nobly here in hospital as he would on the field. He asks for comfort for the friends of Moohono here about him, for the parents so far away in the home country. Finally the comforting all-familiar prayer is spoken in words of a different language. With bent heads and lowered voices the Tahitians repeat the "Our Father": "*E io matou Metua i te oa ra, ia raa to oe i'oa, . . .*"

In the brilliant southern sunshine the little procession winds up the white, dusty road to the cemetery on the hill. A dusky group in the dark uniform of the Colonial walk behind the coffin, in a close little cluster, anxious to be as near as possible to each other and the comrade they are accompanying on his last journey. Behind

them in orderly couples come the infirmières in their dark veils, the French soldiers, two and two, the villagers who have joined on the road this military funeral for an unknown soldier of France.

The coffin is lowered into the loosely turned earth, the minister has spoken the final blessing of his church. He stands erect and speaks firmly and surely an inspired consecration. A nurse, in her dark veil, steps out from the gathering. With her softer lines she seems a broken, placid figure betokening only sympathy and kindness as she bends slowly down to lay bright cornflowers, pinks and roses of the South beside the grave. As a voice from the deep, mystical, a chant arises on this hill above the sea—the Tahitians' Burial Hymn for Moohono.

Still a little group lingers about the freshly made mound; the Colonial soldiers are placing one more bright bead wreath in this cemetery of France. They look at it critically to see that the lettering is straight "*Mort pour la Patrie.*" With bent heads they walk away after the scattering procession.

THE FRANCO-TAHITIAN

UNLIKE the other Tahitians C— can speak easily the language of foreigners for it is also the language of his father. Here he is interpreter with his army, and from him I have learned many things about Tahiti. Now all shall know of Tahiti, he says. In the old days when a trip from Tahiti to France took nine to fourteen months and there came only vessels of odd designs, three to four decks, with their loads of convicts for New Caledonia,—well that was a different matter! To-day all is changed, and this is principally because there are steamboats coming regularly from the United States, and the States have made a business of trade with Tahiti. And now with the Isthmus of Panama and the resuming of trade all over the world . . . when C— speaks so of the future of his country he talks faster, intensely, his eyes on the distance with the intent, far look of the seer.

To-day the natives may keep very much to themselves. In the country they still live the primitive life of their Island. Palm branches from their own cocoanut trees form the roofs of their houses. They go half naked, working in the earth, fishing and bathing in the warm lakes and rivers. The first shiver of this colder climate of France often had no effect on these Tahitian soldiers, and it is this carelessness with their delicate bodies, as well as the different climate which has caused many cases of pneumonia and bronchitis among them. These and many other things C— told me of his island people, but more

interesting than his interpretations is the interpreter himself.

C—'s case was wholly different from any we had had before among the Tahitians; just nerves, the Doctor diagnosed it; the slanting prominent eyes seemed never at rest, always seeking. . . . He was not happy at games among his comrades. From time to time as he talked with us he glanced at them with a kindly, paternal sort of amusement, as, graceful and dark skinned they angled in the toy fishing-pond or chased each other laughingly about the room or played at ring-toss for forfeits.

"Poor boys, they cannot think," he said "do they ever even talk with you? Their ignorance is badly felt by these natives whom the war has taken from their homes—"

"Where did you learn?"

"Why, in my father's house. I had learned all that could be had from the schools at thirteen years, and then my father had me study with French and English tutors. I believe it is only those of us who succeed to a higher education can judge of the losses our people have suffered." From C—'s drawn face I looked to the others, happy at their games, and wondered.

With the Tahitian's love of victrola music C— could not sympathize. He only smiled indulgently, shaking his head at his comrades as they hung over the phonograph entranced:

"This popular music of Europe which they listen to here? Pah! I wish you could hear their own native songs of Tahiti,—even those we sing here are different. There we sing all through life, from morning to night, at leisure or at work, at rejoicings or meetings, at a wedding or at a funeral. This native original song is produced



HOW THEY BATHE IN TAHITI

with a special sound and is delivered in so many particular ways that cannot be heard anywhere else. Once the foreigner has heard he cannot forget."

"Do show us."

But when, with weird humming and strumming on their stringed instruments, the Tahitians would sing, strange and soft, a song of their own island and people, C— did not join with the others; with a queer, embarrassed sort of smile:

"Ah, no,—I have forgotten to sing Tahiti; I could show you the notes though,—but no, impossible to write down the music of such sounds, you would have such a very poor idea! The most interesting are the *Utes*, more like verses and yet without any of the rules for verses as to their length and number. They're sung always with the same monotonous tone,—but only one who has a thorough knowledge of our language can understand their humor and their bitter raillery. In Tahiti we know well irony as happiness and sorrow—"

An alien sophisticated personality, a stranger in this European country, C— finds a resting place, is at home and at ease among his primitive people. It is with his own simple countrymen, "the boys," he is strangely intimate and loving. Carefully anxious, he would help the lame Domingo to his long chair, or he would spend the afternoon by the sick Nohorai as he lay stretched on his cot in the sunny window. He talked gently as a mother with him, laughing over each homely jest:

"Nohorai must have a warmer coat," he told us,—"do you realize how he suffers here in your cold climate? We haven't the sudden chills and gusts of wind that you have here. In Tahiti is always calm except for the fair

breeze which rises late in the day, and at night-time the *hupe*, a light, fresh wind will come down from the valleys, just to refresh the weather and cool the air which was so heated at noon-time. There, all things, even the weather, are gentle, eh, Nohorai?"

Caressingly he pulled the coat more snugly about the sick comrade: "The simple boys will not take care of themselves, they must be kept well covered."

And the comrades are attached to their C— as the little boy to the fascinating elder brother. They have confidence in him, for he is good and will care for them. Also he is clever and his talk interesting. They would quote his sophisticated remarks, proud, but puzzled and half understanding.

Yet the familiar contact with his own people did not suffice C— here. He was restless and would form many promiscuous intimacies. An American soldier came to the hospital to see him. "We had been in camp together and he promised to look me up when he came down here on leave," C— explained. "We are good friends, he and I, —come now! are we not quite alike in this brown uniform which we both wear? So few people have ever heard of Tahiti," he added good-naturedly, "that often we, in our brown uniforms, are taken for you Americans." Arm in arm with his friend they started off to see the town. "Now surely they will think us two Americans," C— said, partly pleased.

With the French soldiers, whom one would think most nearly his intellectual equals, C— seemed to have even less in common than with his own simple countrymen.

"And yet I should feel at home here among my father's people. I've been in this country before, too. It was

before the war; my father, the little sister, and I traveled along the coast and were in Nice for Carnival week. We came through America in 1913 and stopped at New Zealand. Their way of doing things here in France is so slow and different! My sister and I noticed the change immediately on landing at Marseilles. The men were so everlasting with the baggage and all the rest, and then we could not help noticing too that ugly Southern twang, so different from the French we were accustomed to hear in our father's house in Tahiti."

But the father had merely laughed and known how to mimic this strange French talk, saying the children were not used to the ways of his country, that was all.

C— shook his head with vague incomprehension: "A queer country this,—and as to the people,—certainly the Frenchmen do not understand us. And yet we are written about only by Europeans. Paul Huguenin has written probably the best book on Tahiti, *Raitia la Sacrée*. Raitia is an island about twenty miles from Tahiti and with its two mounts, Tapioi and Temehani is also the Land of Legends. These Huguenin has given out without altering in the least their native inspiration. Yet, some of the customs described in *Raitia la Sacrée* are out of date now. *Le Mariage de Loti* is especially interesting as it deals with the modern period." That he should mention the book so casually! I had thought the story of the coming to this little island in the Pacific of the French Marine officer, his life and love there with a beautiful native of the Island and his subsequent casual abandonment of her when he returns to the life of civilization, a theme to be avoided. Since, for Loti and Gauguin, the native Islanders, like the beauty of their island are appreciated

from an artistic point of view, but from the human and moral angle,—well they are so different, like a race of some beautiful wild animal even.

With hands in his pockets, thoughtfully and coolly the Franco-Tahitian will discuss anything. Strained and hard his face seemed to harden a bit more to his words:

"As to Rarahu's love for Loti, well one must be cautious in giving one's opinion."

"Rather I think it is a question of the devotion of Loti to Rarahu, is it not?"

He smiled reservedly. "No, I believe you mistake there, rather it is Rarahu's love for Loti would cause difference of opinion. And yet one should be gentle in judging this little girl of the country. You must consider the background,—custom, civilization, for any book naturally, and I for one can put quite aside the character of the author. His description of the easy life existing at the time is quite true, and it shows also how readily the natives' minds can be led. Relations of our women were very free with Europeans,—you in the East could not really understand," unlike his simpler comrades C— was ever politely conscious that he talked with a foreigner.

"Well, you must not think that I at all defend these free relations or customs,—but—" his smile had a sort of broken tolerance in it, nothing of conviction. "None understand so well as our pretty women how to dance at the festivities of welcome; for these songs and dances natives will even come from all the districts to Papeete. And then you see it was the custom for the woman leader of the dance to kiss all the visitors one after another. So was Loti kissed by Rarahu, and the description of the

flight of the two by moonlight, on a canoe at sea, is beautiful, isn't it?"

C—'s taste for French books is different from that of the Frenchmen. He smiled at their fondness for the *roman*; stories are all very well to pass the time, but the French political and literary *Revue*s are his favorite reading. In all he wishes to learn and to inform himself.

"I am never satisfied with what I have, I must learn and get on, somehow. I feel my mind drawn many different ways," with a characteristic gesture drawing his hand across his tired eyes.

He wished me to tell him of the best known English novels and then he would read them; but as the reading went more slowly than he liked he asked to take English lessons.

"And won't you get up a class for my brothers here? They would rather learn English than French any day. They associate the language with those brave men of the London Missionary Society who came to Tahiti very long ago, and did so much good among the natives. Of course there have been other religions brought to Tahiti. There were the Roman Catholic Missionaries, then the gross Mormons and the Adventists. Buddhism, too, is practiced in the Island to-day."

"You have surely had more opportunity than most to know of a number of creeds; which have you thought most nearly expressed the truth?"

"Of all these different cults? Well, one should be cautious as to giving one's opinion about different religions. Besides it would take far too long for me to begin to tell you what I think. Then, too, it is difficult really to know. Yes, indeed I can assure you I have heard

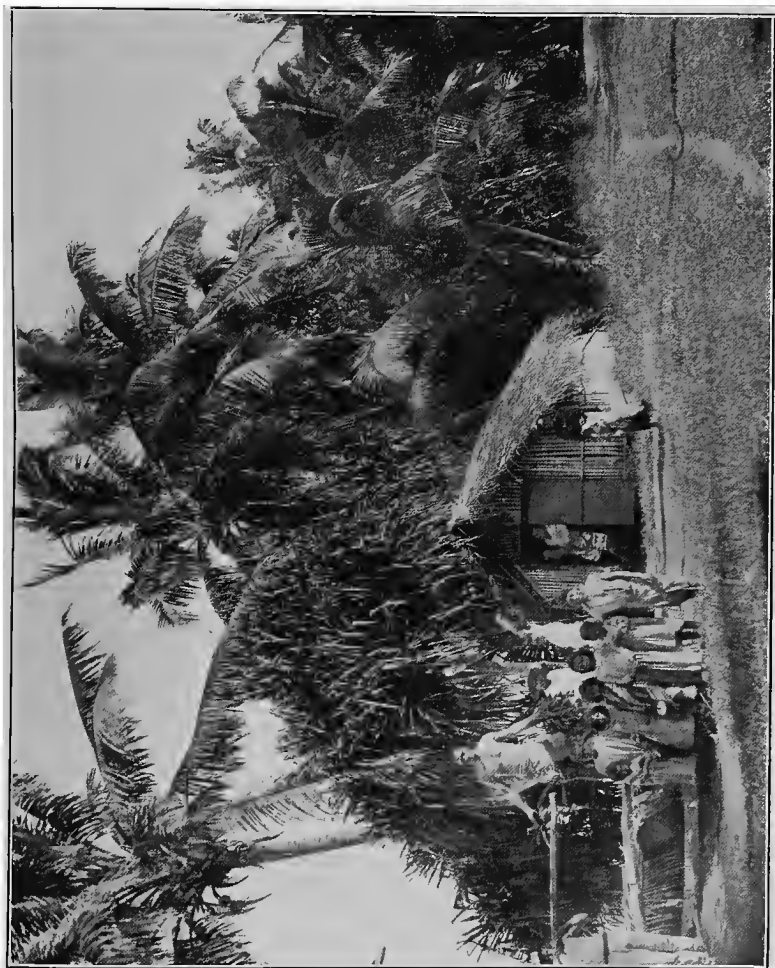
many teachings and of many beliefs," his laugh was cynical, "and just as surely as there are many of these beliefs of yours, so there are many deceived and led wrong, poor simple people. Certainly there can be no question of truth!" he laughed again, almost cruelly. "Ah no! You must judge religion as you would judge of anything else in the world, that is by cause and effect. What does this religion or that one effect, how much actual tangible good does it do? The Mormons with their materialism have appealed with some success to the materialist class,—very true. But it's not this sort of results, church membership, and all that I mean, you understand. Some of the churches have done really progressive work among us. Their periodicals help us to know our own progress, and through them outsiders may learn of us,—"
C—'s eyes gained that far-away look which they always wore when he talked of the future, the destiny of his people. They narrowed again as he continued with intensity. "It is this we need, especially, to be brought up to date. Tahiti has too long been an isolated Island!"

"So you like to have foreigners come among you for industrial and trading purposes?"

"Surely we have always been an hospitable people," with a queer, sideways smile.

"I should think from what you tell me that you are to-day especially dependent on Chinese settlers?"

His eyes narrowed strangely: "They are too much among us! Let our people stay away from their restaurants and their talk! It is only a foreign habit without reason makes the native wish for wine with his meals. No, after all, life is happiest and best in the country. The owner of the smallest plantation has a refreshing drink



THE PRIMITIVE LIFE OF THE ISLAND

from his cocoanut trees. The kernel is ground too and exposed to the sun with flowers whence the girls get their *monoi*, oil for the hair to keep it glossy and light, and an ointment for massage to make their bodies soft and tender . . . The large dark leaves, *niau*, we may put with pretty light fern in our houses, and the dried leaves we carry as torches to fish late at night on the reefs that encircle Tahiti!"

There came news of a plague in the Islands. Some thought it the result of bombardment by German battle-ships which had appeared off Tahiti during the first days of war; C— shook his head grimly:

"Superstition, all of it; our people are dying, that is all; why, it is nature, and our life, a simple country people as we are,—and how the foreigners have played with us! Even the Chinese, not content with getting trade into their hands, wish to settle among us!"

One day, C— did not approach us to talk as was his custom; his restless face looked unusually strained, set in its difficult lines, as he sat apart reading his book.

"I have had bad news," he told us simply, "and must have other things to think of; I have heard this morning that at home my father and mother are both dead. Of course this is just my share; that plague —" The faces of his comrades, as they looked over at C— were resigned and sweet with sympathy, but C—'s face was only plainer and more haggard. "I cannot think," he said. "Who are the Gods of the Tahitians, that such trouble should come upon us all; to-day we worship the Protestant God of the Christians, it is true,—but were we less happy in the old days? We have had many religions, Buddhism, even; I can get comfort from none. . . . Well,

at any rate your European books distract me,—for to-day give me some really exciting ones: I must have books and books and always more books that I *need* not think!"

C—waited unhappily for the letter from Tahiti which might tell him more. "But it takes a letter three months to come. The worst of it is," he told me, "that our home is gone, my sister will have to find work. Bah, what does it mean when a Tahitian girl goes to work? She is alone in the big city, she meets foreigners, soldiers and sailors off the boats; they go to balls and dances, and then there are the Chinese, underhand in all . . ." He laughed harshly; there was something cruel in the sound.

"Do you think that we of native blood can ever return to our old life happily, after we have mingled with you foreigners? . . . still it is in our blood, I suppose,—my father came from one of the big ships, and my grandfather,—it is for this I know the world and many languages and much that my Tahitian brothers do not know."



TAHITIAN GIRL

THE TAHITIANS STUDY ENGLISH

THE Tahitians' ward resembles a nursery or a primary school-room with the highly colored English alphabet charts tacked on the wall: "A is for Animal,—B stands for Bear"—the sounds of the elementary language are quite different from the current Latin ones, and the English sounds are as yet wholly unfamiliar. But they are determined to learn. Interest in English lessons has almost absorbed enthusiasm for games. Alphabet blocks, such as children play with, have taken the place of playing cards. They sit puzzling over the chart on the wall and rehearsing the sounds: "E is for Elephant," and so on, it is grown a sort of methodical, rhythmical chant, accompanied with regular nodding of the head.

Gravely professorial, their instructress stands under the brightly colored charts facing a different sort of class from any she has met with heretofore in her long years of teaching varying and cosmopolitan Riviera pupils. On the bench opposite her sit her class: Nohorai, simple and conscientious, Tiafariu with his shifting clever eyes, always the first in making responses, Teanio who thinks it foolish to learn, but has joined the class because the others have. All of them have a wondering, puzzled, half-amused expression, their eyes fixed intently on their teacher. Only Pouroto's round serious ones are rarely raised from a model copy-book where he traces line after line of symmetrical letters. The only way to teach these Tahitian soldiers is through object lessons; the appeal of color, of touch and sound.

"What is this?" the instructress questions the head of the class, at the same time pointing to an object on her chart. Shyly and slowly each answers in turn:

"It is a flower."

"A table."

She speaks slowly, and with emphasis:

"Put the flowers on the table." She looks sternly from one to the other. Tiafariu obeys dumbly. He gets up slowly and solemnly; the others smile or giggle shamefacedly, amused at what Tiafariu will do, having but half understood themselves. They watch him interestedly, taking it all as a joke or as some sort of a comical game. Tiafariu alone is very solemn as he lifts the flower vase and places it again on the table; his eyes are fixed on the teacher for instructions almost with the concentration of some hypnotized victim. "Put the flowers on the table,—under the table." Tiafariu solemnly obeys, looking up at her for approval even when he obediently stoops to place the vase on the floor.

Then Pouroto properly dusts, and the others place the toy tea-cups; their teacher sees that everything is in place in the correct English fashion:

"Have some tea, Tiafariu?"

"How much sugar, Pouroto?"

After "Tea" the "English lesson" is terminated by instruction in the etiquette of leave-taking. One brings "Miss" her hat, another her cane. One by one and solemnly they all shake hands "Good-bye." These dark, clumsy soldiers bowing half-amusedly, half-embarrassed over the hand-shaking, are like nothing quite as much as children at their first dancing school.

Now even at 7:30 in the morning the Tahitians' ward

is already swept clean, and Pouroto, fully attired in the stiff pink shirt, which he can only afford to wear when the morning's chores are done, is already seated over his copy-book, laboriously tracing beautifully formed letters. The Tahitians are suddenly become talkative in loud sounding phrases of a strange language, and yet what we may recognize at times. We are greeted in a chorus of differently spoken "Good mornings." Pouroto, even, looks up solemnly from his book for a very slow:

"Good morning, Miss —"

The formal greeting is more expansive for Lydia, when she comes to clean:

"Good morning, Sweetheart," but I digress,—for this Miss Warner and the English lessons disclaim all responsibility.

THREADS JOINED AND BROKEN

DOMINGO is somewhat a stranger here where he lies in the ward with the other Tahitians. His longish hair outspread on the pillow, is a bluer black, the dusky skin nut-brown and clearer. The face, in profile against the white pillow, is more European in type, with high forehead, a nose slightly aquiline, and full sweet lips.

In the morning, when I enter the long ward to take temperatures, all but Domingo are playful and curious even in this. They take the glass in a clumsy, puzzled, amused way and it is a game with them to read the temperature written there, keeping the glass teasingly from me. Corporal Domingo takes the glass which I give him, daintily, critically, as a connoisseur takes his choicest brand of cigarette. He hands it to me again neatly, with an abstract air, as though it were none of his business or interest to inquire regarding the temperature of the body.

He must have clean linen every day, but is particular that his nurses shall have none of this meaner care. There is nothing which the comrades so love as to wait on their Corporal, taking charge of all the grosser detail of his care, and hovering over him anxiously with loving looks and questions. Domingo chats with them in their own pretty primitive sounds and language. To us, in finer phrases of French, he explains many things about his Tahitian brothers. For Tahiti is the land of his love and his imagination.

"And all are my brothers there—what though my father was an outsider, my mother was a beautiful Tahitian girl."

He is particular to have his drinks, and dainty, sweet dishes at correctly stated intervals. What variation of hospital diet would he like best?

"I think I have no preference," he tells us. "*Moi j'aime tout ce qui est bon.*"

Visitors to the wards all leave Domingo of their choicest fruits, *gâteaux* or flowers, and of these he ever shares with his friends. The kind old Doctor shakes his head as he stands at the bed of his favorite.

"Are you not afraid to be spoiled, my little one?"

"I spoiled? Why no! Surely you cannot spoil one who is sick; I am sick, and so like dainty, pretty things. Yes truly, *la vie est douce* —"

Duchini has also come a stranger among us, from the Italian branch of the Army at the front. He sits erect and unsmiling in bed. He should eat, but he will not. He has arrived at a French hospital when he had thought that he was on his way home to the mother-country. If he could but go to his mother, "*Mama mia,*" if he could but see her, he would be well. He will eat nothing: "Why?"

"I cannot swallow French food."

"How about macaroni?"

He does not believe there is such a thing in France, but yes, if there were, he would eat that.

For a while he takes macaroni gratefully, cooked in the correct Italian manner,—cheese grated over the top of the dish.

In order to provide better nourishment we combine the dish with meats and vegetables gradually. At first he eats in thoughtless hunger, then drops his fork and spoon

idly, but with a sly look, as though discovered like a naughty child, which is a good sign. For the first time he laughs, but will not eat.

"But this is again a strange dish. I have not eaten so in Italy."

Duchini would like to read; and for the long days in bed the Frenchmen have loaned him their favorite *Viscomte de Bragelonne*. But even the thrilling adventure and intrigue of the Court of Louis XIV cannot interest the homesick soldier of Italy; he sighs after the first pages: "If I might only read in the Italian." And our literary pharmacist, with kindly intention brings him his own cherished copy of d'Annunzio. But from this book the sick Duchini turns with real horror.

"My mother does not think it a good book for young people."

After many weeks Domingo is no longer a sweet, still dark profile to us as we enter the hospital ward. Rather he is a bent, old-mannish figure in baggy white pajamas, wearing on the back of his head the broad sombrero to be protected from draft as he takes his first steps along the dark hospital corridor on the arm of his stout infirmière.

One day the tall gloomy Duchini, in his olive-drab uniform, promenading alone in the entry, meets there the strange little figure in baggy pajamas, and broad straw hat, also promenading, but on his nurse's arm. They greet one another, each in his strangely accented French, which is at once a bond. From now on Duchini walks the corridors, his arm about the waist of Domingo, as he bends solicitously over him.

Each night there is a familiar little scene in the Dress-

ings Room, born of the meeting of strangers, when Domingo and Duchini come at the same time for treatment. It is a cosy time as they talk all together, there in the small, neatly tiled room and the cheerful lamplight, with the kind, white ministering nurse.

Soon, Domingo, wearing his large straw hat, is able to sit out in the sun all day. He himself has organized the excursion to the garden. His stretcher is carried down by two more stalwart companions, and placed under the palm trees. Here in the congenial hot southern sun Domingo sits in his large straw hat, and with palm-leaf fan, greeting graciously anyone who will stop to speak with him a moment.

"A pleasant day, is it not? It is warm here, like Tahiti," he says, "yet I want to be gone from your country—I am tired—tired, after these years in the trenches,—I have a little brother, a soldier like myself, you know, dead in France. Yes, I want to be gone from here, gone to Tahiti, yet I shall find Tahiti changed," he mused, poking a lizard with his cane; "we shall no longer crawl about there like lizards, happy in the sun, my little sister and I. Since I am gone my mother has died, and also the little sister, of a malady like my own—yes, my poor people are dying, dying . . . and I wish to die in Tahiti,—my mother's country —"

"Have you not a book of Tahiti?" he asked one day, bored with sitting alone for so long. I regret that he knows there is *Le Mariage de Loti*, and has asked me to bring it to him.

"What do you think of it, Mademoiselle? A pretty description of our island, truly, but *quelle morale!* Well, all the same, it is much like that there, Loti has described

all things well—I should know. I have often thought it must have looked so to my father—"

Soon Domingo, in full brown Colonial uniform and supported by the slim Corporal's cane, walks out in the evening. As he steps on to the terrace his bent round shoulders straighten youthfully, and he touches his cap in salute to the Frenchmen already seated there:

"Bonsoir, Messieurs!"

He sits down always a little apart from the European soldiers, and among his humble compatriots. The little group join in singing some weird, soft song of their island, while Domingo smiles wistfully and drums rhythmically on the floor with his cane. Night after night as they watch the sun go down behind the blue mountains the luminous eyes grow in wistfulness. Domingo speaks for all:

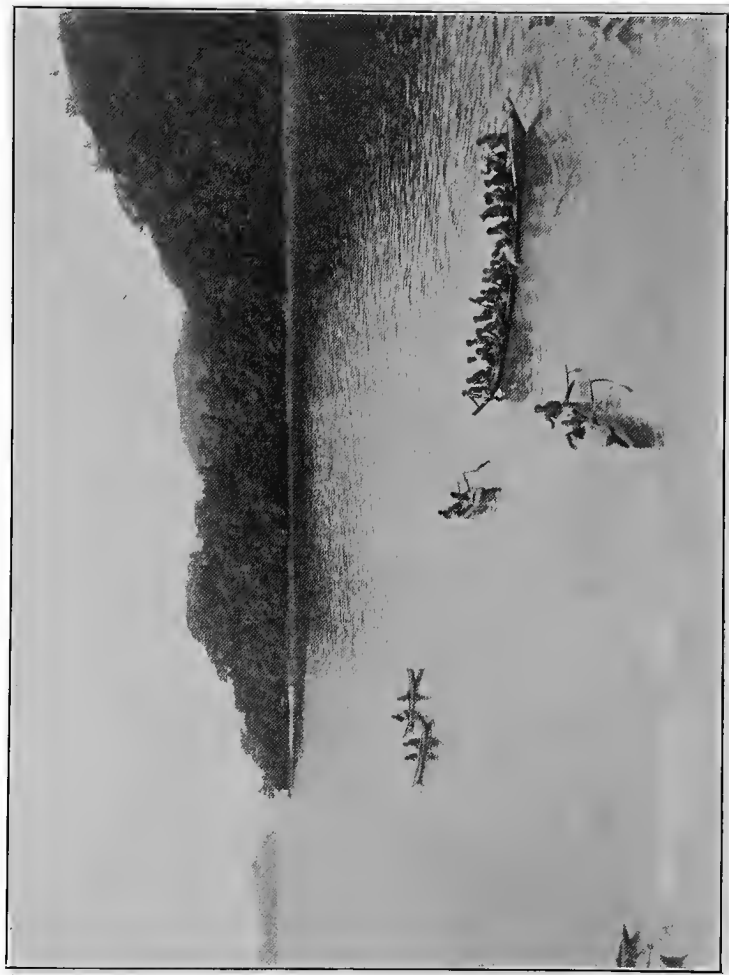
"Here it is almost as beautiful as in Tahiti."

Gradually, as Duchini gets up and sits in his chair by the window he decides:

"After all, the palms and the coast are very like Italy!"

In the evening he, too, wanders out on the terrace—a tacit concession to sociability, wearing also a French soldier's cap on the side of his head, which lends somewhat a jaunty air to the uniform of dull green and drab olive. Yet he does not sit down among the Frenchmen, but hesitates before joining with any group. All are strangers to him here again, the poilus singing, talking among themselves, the group of brown Tahitians chattering and laughing. Only one among them wistful, delicate, seems somehow a stranger like himself; among his own people, yet he is not. Domingo too has noticed the hesitating figure in the doorway. He motions Du-

IN TAHITI



chini to him. After this all through the long evenings Domingo's chair is drawn close to Duchini's. In the common French language, which both speak as educated strangers, their talk is in the "long, long thoughts of youth," critical of France and differently developed natures, each citing his own ideals and love of the home country.

"Tell me how old are you, Domingo?"

"Just twenty-one,—why?"

"I wondered because the Frenchmen always call you '*le petit vieux*',—but you have always seemed to me about my age,—nineteen,—I might have said."

"The Frenchmen,—what do they know? Their laughter is hard and they cannot see the heart. But you, dear Duchini, you come from a more friendly, sunny country like my own, you look to the heart, you understand."

"Alas,—how far the war has brought us from our own dear countries, Domingo."

"But just think of this, that it has brought us two together, Duchini. I come from the West,—all the way from Tahiti, and you from the East and old Italy, and here we are met like two brothers. Does not your religion teach you so, Duchini? Only it says all are brothers, and here are you the only one I have found, the only one of a different country, I mean. Then I have always wondered so much, Duchini, about those German boys we are told to kill, our age perhaps,—who can tell?"

"I have wondered, too, Domingo,—you know that always makes me think especially of my mother at home, and I wonder if these boys have mothers,—I have often told you of my mother, have I not? I fear never to see her again."

"Now do not cry, my Duchini, I am sure you will see your mother. Think how near lies your Italy!"

"Yet I may not go home, but am sent from one hospital to another,—I shall have an operation at the next. Have you not thought of this, Domingo, that we no longer measure by distance and time as we are taught at school, but by Life and Death, by pain and sorrow? Here are you but twenty-one and I just nineteen, and yet we must sit and talk as old men together."

"Indeed yes, Duchini, it is the war that makes old. You know the very thought of war always seems to me all that is grown gray and ugly and old, like an hideous old man that I see sometimes in my dreams when my wound pains me especially. Now children do not think of wars, but are always just happy and at play together. And this war now, is it not a war of the oldest countries? Why, in our young, sunny country was no thought of war."

"Do not misunderstand me, Domingo. This war had to come,—only we of Italy are too hot-blooded, quickly roused; we cannot endure this coming and going, this long-drawn-out suffering! Let us fight at once to the end and die rather! No soldier of Italy fears to die!"

"Yet, why, why die, my Duchini? Is it not a sinful waste of sweet Life, when somewhere yet are things to enjoy, flowers and music and soft red lips,—red as that sky—look toward the sky of the sunset, Duchini! There lies Tahiti!"

Night after night, when the red sun has gone down behind the blue mountains, Domingo and Duchini, the stranger comrades, separate in the grayness of dusk.

"Buono Notte, Domingo mia."

"Ia ora na, Duchini."

Duchini has gone home to his mother, and Domingo is pronounced *evacué*, and is to take the first boat sailing from Marseilles. The last few weeks in hospital have been happy ones; all who know him here wish to show him kindness before he goes.

He is asked out to tea, to eat ice cream in the village of an afternoon. The delicate slim figure of the stranger is become almost as familiar in the little town and in the provincial parlors of the kind inhabitants as it has been in hospital. Everyone is wishing Domingo "*bon voyage*." His pack is already too heavy to carry, and he has given of his presents to the less fortunate who remain behind.

From Duchini, at home with his mother, we have not heard again, but this is the only home which Domingo has known in France. His thoughts turn back to us on every stage of his journey. Graceful, beautifully written little notes reach us from Paris,—then Marseilles.

"Juste 2 mots à la hâte pour vous souhaiter le bonjour et une bonne Santé. Ici je me porte très bien et j'espère que ma Carte vous trouvera aussi en bonne santé—Au Revoir—et recevez mes meilleures sympathies et mon amitié.

Bon Souvenir

de votre petit Tahitian qui pense à vous"

"Marseilles le 1er Novembre, 1918.

Chère Maman,

Je vous envoie cette Carte pour faire savoir que je suis à Marseilles depuis hier à 4 hr de l'après midi mais dans un état fatigué. Mais aujourd'hui je me

sens beaucoup mieux et demain je serais tout à fait sur mon séant. Pour aujourd'hui il n'y a rien de nouveau. Chère Maman e tehoi au ia oe iti ta oe tamaiti."

Domingo was looking again on the bluest ocean over which he might soon sail to his own dear country.

But the boat did not sail; month after month it did not sail. At length it would not sail, not this year. Domingo's bright postal cards, his carefully penned little notes, reached us less frequently, and at length held only good wishes for us.

"The boat did not sail," Domingo said, when he was returned to us with a hospital detachment. "I shall not see my country again." And after this he rarely spoke.

His hopes and little enthusiasms had gone; only a feeble, failing spirit seemed yet to cling gently to the gentler niceties of life, things of smallest meaning. He asked to have his long finger-nails polished until they showed a soft pink on the white sheet, and he would look pleasurably at the brown hands as they lay there before him. The last day of his life he spoke of the delicacy of the sweet southern pear cooked whole for his lunch. He wished to live, and his life ebbed out slowly; it was fought out rather, a fight to the last between the brave, youth-loving spirit and the too delicate body.

POMA TEA

(LIGHT AND SHADOW)

THE long, dark hospital lay behind her as she came out on the palm-covered pathway, a blue-veiled and nun-like figure, her eyes looking wearily down on the path before her.

"*Iaorana*, do you remember me?"

He seemed to have come from the bluest of seas or the red, sinking sun, as she looked up and saw him, tall, brown-faced, brilliant-eyed, standing there under the palm-tree.

He held out a large hand shyly, and she gladly gave him her own.

"Indeed I remember, it was you who made me this basket, and what were the colors I loved best you asked me, and then you embroidered it so; all intertwined with blue and pink string, and your own pretty words in Tahitian. See how I carry it to town now to market."

"Mademoiselle, I have come to tell you *Iaorana*,—the boat will soon sail for Tahiti."

"It was good of you. *Bonne chance, bon voyage!*"

"Mademoiselle, yet it is this I wish to tell you,—please stop just a moment," he stood twisting his shabby blue cap in his hands, and looked down at the pathway.

"Yes?"

"When I was ill you made me sweet cakes, and then I liked you best always. It is a year ago since I

first saw you, when you cared for me here in the hospital. I wrote to my father at home, to know if I might bring with me a wife from France. The mails are slow to Tahiti, and only now his letter has come, and it says yes, I may bring you!"

His eyes, too brilliant above her, made her look down at the pathway. His assurance was sweet and primitive and she hesitated for an answer:

"All my thanks, but your country is very far."

He pointed to the sea: "Just over there."

"I know but,—well, will you carry my basket to market, just for to-day?"

They went down through the deserted gardens, and laughing, he pointed up at the broad leaves over their heads:

"In Tahiti I am *cultivateur*, it is good to work in the earth."

"I love to pick flowers."

Out on the walk by the sea they mingled with simple fisher-folk mending their nets, busy over the boats drawn up on the shore.

"There,—*là-bas*, I have a boat to fish on the river," he told her, "and then, sometimes, I go into the big city of Papeete. It is a beautiful city because it is by the water, and one watches the boats as here, all the boats coming and going," he pointed eagerly. Canes he thinks beautiful, too, because the ocean is here. Yes, and she, too, thinks the ocean most beautiful.

They walked on through the gay little streets of the town, he silent and dark, unable to talk among strangers; she busy with details and her basket, stopping for flowers and fruits, greeting old shopkeepers and townspeople.

When they returned alone up the pathway he spoke again.

"In Tahiti we have fruits bright as the oranges in this basket, and the *fei*, which are sweeter."

Briefly she gave him her hand, and turned quickly from him, to where a light twinkled, and she went in by the safe, narrow doorway. He stood without; stoical, dark, unremonstrating. With bent shoulders he turned down the darkening pathway. The light was gone from the sea.

THE TAHITIANS SAY FAREWELL

THE Tahitians' boat will soon sail from Marseilles, and they have asked all of us in the hospital to a farewell concert.

The wooden *réfectoire* benches are in place in dull rows, one behind the other; but this afternoon the high glass chandeliers are hung with yellow mimosa. The graceful, drooping sprays mingle prettily with the bright glass pendants, there is a light as of southern sunshine over the long dark hall. How is it that when Tahitians arrange the flowers, which they love, they always seem quite inevitably and beautifully in place, almost as though growing there?

At the door, as we go in, there stands a silent Tahitian soldier who solemnly hands each infirmière a red rose. Our Tahitian patients are seated in a dusky semicircle at the end of the hall; they are in the familiar brown uniform, but each is wearing a crown of bright flowers, and, a sign that they are in especially festive mood, a rose behind each ear. With them sits their infirmière in white dress and veil, she who knows their language, and they know some of hers. They all look to her, intent to catch the tune and words, as she leads the chorus into her own sweet Italian airs, which they have often practiced together and accompanies the singing on her guitar. The stranger voices follow hers with a somewhat embarrassed, but poignant, sweetness, into that air of old Italy:

"Santa Lucia,—Santa Lucia—"

Then little Laurent, holding his large stringed instrument, decorated with a long garland of flowers, stands up in the centre of the semicircle, and, facing his comrades, with his back to the audience, and nodding his head with its flower-crown enthusiastically, and stamping his foot in time, he leads the little company in singing. And in accordance with the Tahitian custom of singing spontaneous songs to fit every occasion, Laurent Tarahu, their leader, has composed these verses of farewell:

Aue hoi i te mauui rahi	Hélas la grande peine
I te moeraa ia matou atoa	Que ça a été pour nous
To matou fare, o tei nohohia	De quitter notre maison
E matou te oto nei a matou	Ou nous avons demeuré
I to matou taaeraa.	Cette séparation nous a
	causé beaucoup de cha-
	grin.

They have spoken their gratitude in music and words quite their own; the enthusiastic applause which follows seems to put a stop to strange, weird tunes, vibrations but scarcely awakened.

After all they face an audience of foreigners,—even their “comrades,” the poilus, have smiled at times. There is a hesitant pause,—then, smiling themselves, a little shamefacedly, the performers begin again. They are not forceful singers, at best, but sweet and moody,—and as they sing of Tahiti, their own land of flowers and love and sunshine, they become gradually self-forgetful.

Charmante terre de Tahiti
O douce mere! O doux pays!

O douce terre de fraternité!
O doux pays, O doux pays de liberté!

And then as always there is a refrain:

O Tahiti! pays d'amour
Tu regne dans nos coeurs,
O Tahiti, O doux sejour
A toi les courronnes de fleurs!
Pays de ma naissance,
Pays chéri de France,
Tu fus ma royauté
Garde toujours ta liberté.

Again:

Là bas sous le ciel bleu
Tout près des cieux,
Noyé par le soleil
Brillant, vermeil,
Terre de verdure
Où la nature est un tresor.

C'est un jardin fleuri
Ou tout sourit,
Les femmes et les fleurs
Ont des couleurs
Fraîches et jolies,
Qui font envie a tous les coeurs.

REFRAIN

C'est la terre Tahitienne
Le pays des amours,
Et cette terre est la mienne
Je l'aimerai toujours.

There is a restless movement as of smothered laughter on the benches where the Frenchmen are seated, as the tall serious Faatea advances from the little group of singers, and with solemn face and gestures makes us a speech in the language which we cannot understand. Then Laurent explains in French the words of their leader Faatea:

"The Tahitians have come very far, and here, in a strange country, many of them have fallen sick. Yet even here they have found friends and have been received kindly and cared for tenderly. They wish to thank the hospital and the infirmières; they have some little gift for each one, it is not much,— a string of yellow shells for one, a seed crown for another. Now they are returning home again across two seas, but on their long journey and all their lives they will never forget us, but carry memories always in thankful hearts."

TAHITIAN LETTERS

[Original Letters from Convalescent Tahitian soldiers to their former Infirmière in a Hospital of the French Red Cross. Their letters are illustrative of their return voyage from Marseilles to Tahiti, and of their arrival in Tahiti, summer of 1919.]

(Translated from the French and Tahitian)

le 23 Mai, 1919.

Abord de l'El Kantara

A ma petite mère bien aimée:

I write unto thee little one these little words of greeting for thee and for the little children who remain in thy hands. Oh, dear little Mother, since the day we departed from thee little one, there sprang up in our hearts sorrow and great pain. Alas, oh, my dear little Mother, when I think of thee and of thy little good works and of thy little songs by thee taught to me—alas, the pain, O dear little Mother, to remember thee every day and every morning when you came into our room and said to us "*Iarana.*" Then "Rascals" you called us, your playing and romping children! Naughty, naughty, Mother! Yet, alas, oh, thou little one, I wish that we two could sing again as we were wont to do *In questa barchettina* and thy little song by us sung for thee *Parahi oe*,¹ and "No, Sir" and especially "Farewell."

¹ This is the song to which Laurent Tarahu refers in his letter. It was composed, translated, and put to music by him and sung by him and his comrades when parting from their nurse who had cared for them in hospital. The song

Well, dear little mother, I will tell thee how we find ourselves here on board since our departure from Marseilles. The two first days we were a little sea-sick and now we are very well, even the sickest, as for example, Louis, Rua, Tarihaa and the others, are also very well. Chère Maman, I do what thou hast told me to do in regard to the little bags,¹ but there was not enough for all the sick of Continental. At the last they were all very well pleased and I explained to them that there was not enough for everyone, and even so they answered me Thank you for our dear little Mama.

Alors, dear little Mother, I conclude my little speech while I communicate greetings to thee for all the children of Tahiti who remain with thee every day and who are sick of the great sickness. When I get to Tahiti I shall write again to thee and will let thee know the condition of the little families whom the Spanish cough (influenza)

is typical of the custom of these Islanders, who, at home, compose little songs for every occasion and then meet to sing together:

**TE AROHA O TE TAMARII
IA MAMA ITI HERE—**

Parahi oe e Mama here
Te moe nei hoi matou
Eita oe e moe raa
Ia matou taatoa.

No te rahiroa to oe here
Ia matou taatoa
E mihi matou ia oe
E to matou metua e!

**THE GREETING OF THE
CHILD TO DEAR LITTLE
MOTHER**

Adieu Maman chérie
Nous nous éloignons
Nous ne t'oublierons jamais
Aucun de nous t'oublierons
jamais.

Parce que tu nous a
Beaucoup aimés
Nous te pleurons
O notre chère Mère.

¹ Comfort Bags given to Laurent Tarahu to distribute to the comrades on shipboard.

has attacked. Now I kiss thee for my great affection for thee, and for thy great affection for me. Farewell, Mother dear.

Thy affectionate child,

LAURENT TARAHU.

(Translated from the French)

Mahina, 16 July, 1919.

To my dear little Mother:

I salute you in the name of the Father of the Son and of the Holy Ghost—amene.¹

Dear little Mother, we arrived at Tahiti the 28th of June at one o'clock in the afternoon, and at that time we are sad, because we had no longer any fathers nor any mothers, nor even any brothers and sisters, our country is no longer numerous; it is nothing but children.² In the country districts there are only children, poor country. For our children³ we are very happy since Marseilles to Tahiti the sea is calm. On our trip we lost 5 Tahitians, 1 Caledonian sharpshooter and one little girl. In our family I lost two aunts, two uncles and a cousin and numerous relations, but God will aid us. I have not much

¹ This is a form of salutation often used by Christian Tahitians as is the following: "Hail (or greeting) unto thee in the name of the True God when we meet in this letter."

² The 1918-19 epidemic of influenza was especially severe in Tahiti, partly because of the delicate lungs of these Islanders. It caused the death of a great part of the native adult population.

³ These soldiers referred to themselves as "the children of Tahiti."

news to give you. I hope that you will come to Tahiti in a few years, we shall be very happy if you will come to us.

Send also news of yourself and of your family. I and Teamo very well, as also my comrades.

I end my little letter in wishing you with a good handshake.

Thy¹ son Muehumua Etaeta who will never forget thee, thou remainest always in my heart to the end of my life.

Write me your letter half in Tahitian.

*Te aroha atu nei maou taatoa mau tamarii faehou Tahiti ia oe Mama iti.*²

The greetings of us all, the soldier children of Tahiti, to thee, little mother.

(Translated from the French and Tahitian)

Papeete, August 19, 1919.

A ma chère Mama iti here. Ia ora na oe i te fareiraa na roto i teie nei rata iti Aroharaa ia oe iti e i te mau tamarii rii o tei parahi i pihai iho ia oe.

¹ Throughout the letter, up to this point the personal pronoun "vous" has been used by the writer, this being the first time he makes use of the more informal form of address. It is interesting to note that the Tahitian, when he writes or speaks in French, makes no distinction between the use of "vous" and "tu," you and thou. Probably our difference in form of address denotes nothing to him, as, reflecting the communistic spirit of equality between all born Tahitians, they do not use the form "you" for addressing one person, as it is used in other languages.

² Those more educated Tahitians who knew the French language seemed to be the prouder of their own native tongue. They were zealous teachers, and in their letters, when written in French, would never fail to write some passage in Tahitian with the French translation, of which the English is given here.

Hail to thee in the meeting within this little letter. Grace to thee little one and the little children who dwell beside thee. Now shall I tell thee how I find myself here in my own country? I must tell thee that I am in very good health as is also my little family and all the population.¹ Since our arrival in Tahiti up to the present time we have been fêted continuously. We have not known what to do, we are not able to refuse for fear of annoying them. And now I am in a store as employé in order to earn my living and that of the little family of Tarahu.² Since I have lost my poor father there remains at home my poor mother, who is beginning to age, and my little sister, so that I have three people to care for and in order to care for them one must work in order to have money to buy food. So that now I replace my poor father, I direct the house as he. Now, dear little mother, we are separated one from the other, but our friendship is ever kept in our hearts. I can promise thee also that I shall never forget thee because thou hast been a mother to me in thy kindness and thy love toward me and toward all the sick under thy care, it is this that I keep in my heart an eternal

¹ A more cheerful report than that given by Muehumua Etaeta in the letter preceding. This version of the present writer, Laurent Tarahu, is more typical of the Tahitian who will usually express himself optimistically, whether the facts warrant it or not. So the sick who wrote to us from other hospitals would tell us that they were "as well as possible" even when in reality they were in a dying condition.

² As we might say the Brown, the Smith family, etc. Laurent Tarahu was a Catholic Tahitian and hence had both a Christian and a surname. In the pure Tahitian names the son has the name of the father as: Tahua a Maru, Tahua the son of Maru. There are also those names which the Tahitians call "afix," half English, American, Chinese or French, as Clark, André; Vidal, Paul; Cho Chong, Amim.



THE FAMILY OF A TAHITIAN SOLDIER

souvenir of thee *chère mère Peretane*¹ well beloved by the Tahitians.

Well, then, dear little mother, I received thy little letter yesterday, with a picture of the Blessed Virgin, which gave me great pleasure, and this letter arrived just three days after her Fête of the 15th August; we had a procession at Papeete in front of her *Grotte*.

Now we would speak of our sick.² I think they are not too ill and also we shall always hope to see them, these unhappy young people who also hope to see their parents who await them impatient to know that they are well and safe.

Maintenant, chère Maman, farewell thou and the little children who dwell beside thee. Tell them to take courage unto themselves and pray to God that He help us.

Farewell Mama,

LAURENT TARAHU.

¹ Peretane, the Tahitian for "English" may well come from the French "Bretagne."

² Those Tahitian soldiers who were too ill to make the return trip to Tahiti and remained in France in a military hospital, under the care of the nurse to whom this letter is written. The writer had not had news of them since he sailed from France in May and did not know that at the time of his writing, August 19, 1919, all had died with the exception of Nohorai a Haupuni, the last to go on August 20, 1919. His death, and that of the others is recorded in another chapter.

THEIR LIVES ARE LIKE THE LEAVES

"Their lives are like the leaves
Scattered in flocks of ruin, tossed and blown."
—Sassoon.

There is a strong, hot wind blowing in from the sea, the yellowed leaves, blown here and there with the white sand and dust, are falling, falling . . .

Nohorai, his chair drawn close to the window, is looking out. He seems intently and earnestly watching the leaves whirl through the air, and I wonder if perhaps the phenomenon of autumn, even the slightest indications of it, such as we have here, can be quite unknown in his far country. Nohorai has raised his long thin arm in indefinite gesture, but suddenly the hand is pointing at something intently and directly; it seems to be at a large leaf on the tree in the garden.

"What is it?"

"Tahiti!" he cried, and then started up suddenly, his whole body seemed for a moment to follow the pointing hand and the intent, far look of the eyes. Then, shaking his head, Nohorai fell back again on the pillow, and the upraised arm struck down on his chest almost savagely.

Nohorai asks to have his bed moved away again into the dark corner. To-day he will look out no longer at the falling leaves.

* * * * *

It is hot, late summer, the worst time for the poor consumptives. One after another they are dying like withered leaves swirled away by the dry, hot mistral.

Still Nohorai lies between Tairua a Tehautapapa and Teiho. Teiho a Matehau, he with the large, dark eyes and the fine white teeth, is known as the gentlest even among Tahitians. For days he had not been able to take nourishment; he always felt sick. This morning at 6:30 he took his coffee and milk by spoonfuls, then he settled himself with his cheek in his hand to sleep, and asked the infirmière to cover his face. Half an hour later the nurse returned to take the morning temperature and removed the sheet. The lips were white, the hands cold to touch. Nohorai, lying on the next bed, looked up at her and sighed.

Tairua a Tehautapapa had lain out of doors in the garden. He was brought back to bed and then weakness came and the greater and greater difficulty in breathing. His nurse turned from him and said to the friend Terimana, "Will you get your Bible and read?" . . . She asked of the dying boy if there were anything he wanted? . . . Or was he no longer there? . . .

" . . . *Pure iti*," she thought she understood him. "Pure" means prayer in Tahitian and "iti" is small. "So he wants some little prayer." Terimana was searching in the Bible. Domingo on the next bed said:

"No, he asks for some of that *purée* such as he had at lunch, have you still some of that potato?" But Tairua, feeling her move away, caught at her dress. After all, thought the nurse, perhaps it was the prayer he wanted:

"*E io matou Metua*," she began the "Our Father," and very faintly he said: " . . . *to oe ioa*," Thy Name. . . . Then Tairua spoke again in a feeble voice, "*Mauruuru*," Thank you, and then "Nohorai." Those who bent over him repeated the name so that the friend lying near heard

and answered. . . . Once more Tairua spoke to his friend:

"*Ia ora na*," it stands for every kind of Greeting, and also it is Good-bye.

Nohorai a Haupuni was left alone. He had always seemed more affectionate than his comrades and more homesick for Tahiti than any: but now this vague and indefinite longing seemed to have taken a new turn; Nohorai wished to go, go anywhere to get away from this place where he had seen his comrades die. The desire increased as the already too feeble strength diminished from day to day.

"Oui, c'est joli, l'hôpital, tout est bien, mais, pour moi pas bien."

Then in Tahitian he would explain that for his "*tino*," body, the air here was so bad. He would strike his chest violently because he could not get well, he would show his thin arms and say:

"When I came here they were not like this, and now—*tu vois, tu comprends?*"

He who was so gentle would raise his fist in the air and shake it in wrath, and then not knowing against whom or what to direct his anger, would let it drop again.

These were only outbursts of bitterness. Through it all he clung like a weak sick child to its mother, to his devoted nurse, with a pathetic confidence in what she might be able to do for him. When she was obliged to leave him for a short while he welcomed her back.

"Mau maururu vai, i iti Maman," (I was glad to see Mama) and then, making a great effort in French:

"Ici Mama 'ya 'ya 'ya—quelque chose ; pas ici Mama 'ya rien *rien!*"

He did not speak reproachfully at all, but as one who sadly and gently states a fact. He did not wish her to leave his side, and to emphasize the "*rien*," he shook his right hand in the air with all the fingers, such long thin fingers, well spread out.

For three nights consecutively the nurse had not left him for a moment. She had kept her place beside him continually fanning, then, almost exhausted, on the third night she asked his permission to leave him. But he was firm and gentle ; he feared she was tired and took the fan out of her hand, but said she must stay. She was to sit on the chair by the bed and put her head on the bed and "*taoto*," sleep, but she was to stay ! So she remained there beside him sleeping at moments from sheer exhaustion, and then rubbing his chest from time to time, while the Annamite attended to the fanning and the spittoon.

Nohorai complained once or twice and then he consented to an injection of ether, and later of *huile camphré*, but he was on no account to be given an injection of morphia, for he knew what that meant, and he wanted to live ! Early in the morning he said that his heart hurt him, and then he must get up and lie in the *chaise longue* by the window again. We arranged him in it, his old place, and I wondered if he noticed as he looked out, that the tree outside was swept quite bare of leaves after the summer's winds. His breath became more and more labored and he suffered ;—finally at six o'clock he consented to an injection of morphia.

After that he hardly said anything more,—sometimes "*Mama iti*," as, he struggled to smile,—to live.

On a plain marble slab which stands amidst yellow flowering mimosa trees among the gray hills of Grasse there are written names over which you might pause and wonder:

TEIHO A MATEHAU
 MAITIA A MAITIA
 TAREVAURA A TAPARE
 TAIRUA A TEHAUTAPAPA
 ALFRED DOMINGO, CAPORAL

—and, at the last,

NOHORAI A HAUPUNI

And below the names one reads:

"LE SEIGNEUR DIEU LES ECLAIRERA
 ILS VERRONT SA FACE."

APOCALYPSE XXII, 4-5.

PART III.
FOYER-BIBLIOTHEQUE



A HOSPITAL GROUP

AU FOYER

HERE there was no organization Foyer du Soldat. The *médecin chef* sent quite unofficially for "les dames Américaines," and we talked it over: what might be done? There followed much discussion: we could not furnish them a living-room, too expensive, of course, out of the question! How if we merely left them the simplest things, magazines, checkers, cards and writing materials? But there was no room; where were the requisite tables and benches, even? We should find too after a little time the things would inevitably disappear; a hospital of close on to 400 men, "*vous savez*"! Then too this might upset military discipline,—the men should have recourse to nothing, no, not even books and games to tempt them from the wards in the mornings, when the doctors made their visits. How if we should come in the afternoon, then, to provide the books and games, music and the rest in certain hours? Well, there was a solution! The men could even aid us to move tables from their *réfectoire* down to the long gray hall on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. And would it be possible to open our Foyer on their *jour de l'an*? The men had no Christmas celebration, even.

Listless groups hung around the long bleak hospital hall; charwomen in dirty white, soldiers inactive and despondent; only something in the heavy inert faces seemed wondering,—what was it we had come to do among them?

A soldier in neat poilu's blue stepped from somewhere

in the crowd to put himself completely "*a votre service*" in our predicament. With conveniently long arms he was especially agile and obliging about hanging flags and pictures; an ex-performer from the *Café Chantant*, he had an eye for the dramatic and the decorative evidently.

A dark, rough-looking man with baggy trousers, turned-down collar and yellow tie, wearing a low slouched hat, came in from the garden, an uprooted palm tree in either hand. He was not a brigand, but only an Italian convalescent, with his own ideas of decoration. The palms were to be tied to the high central columns and were to frame our pictures. He began to cut the branches apart vehemently,—and we could only hope that we should not all come in for military reprimand as destroyers of the property. In his aesthetics, at least, the Italian is always right; with palms tied to the pillars and framing our Generals, the hall began to look genuinely decorated.

On the *jour de l'an*, the first of January, 1919, there were gathered together in the great hallway filled with sunshine, soldiers gay and companionable, cooks in their white aprons, charwomen awkward and ugly, chic and pretty. There were officers and doctors gorgeous and beautiful in their best uniforms, all in honor of their *jour de fête*. A dashing *chasseur* seized a white aproned cook about the waist and whirled him around and round to the strumming victrola waltz. From the militarized cook we had military permission to serve something more than the military fare on their *jour de l'an*. The men filed by the great copper kettle, each one with his *quart*, for a cup of steaming hot chocolate and our wish of "*Bonne Année!*"

"*Salon de Lecture et de Jeu,*"—the gay red and blue

sign is really not as obvious as it looks,—there is a fine distinction in words here! Our “afternoons” could, it is true, be spoken of as “Foyer,” but this is not, strictly speaking, correct. The word Foyer in popular parlance denotes also that there are refreshments! Now we could not afford to lay emphasis on this aspect of our impromptu entertainment; a “*goûter*” was sometimes provided and sometimes not. According to the traditional salon this more material factor is quite accidental!

There is tobacco smoke and gay victrola music, bright colors and sunshine, dark corners and dim electric lights, incongruous groups and figures. Men black, white or brown, they are there on crutches, on stretchers, carelessly dressed in baggy pajamas, the jaunty soldier’s cap, odd bits of uniform blue and red, shuffling hospital slippers. The bleak, bare hall is become the common living-room of them all: men from Tahiti, New Caledonia, Madagascar, Reunion Island, as well as the *poilu* of France. Together they gather over the blazing open fires, chattering, laughing, roasting chestnuts, and enjoying the hot, luscious *marrons*. They talk quietly, one with another, gazing silent into the flames. Here is at least an approach to the *foyer*, *hearth*, heart of the home!

Again, it is a “*salon*” of habitués, talking together or gathered about one hostess or another, listening and talking of books, of any question of interest. Some prefer not to talk; they listen to the music, they play a game. And is there any incipient disorder: “Such games and actions are for the gardens, but not for the *salon*, *n’est-ce pas?*” And we have not needed to say more.

The Tahitians will hang over the phonograph for hours together, listening intently, humming accompaniment to

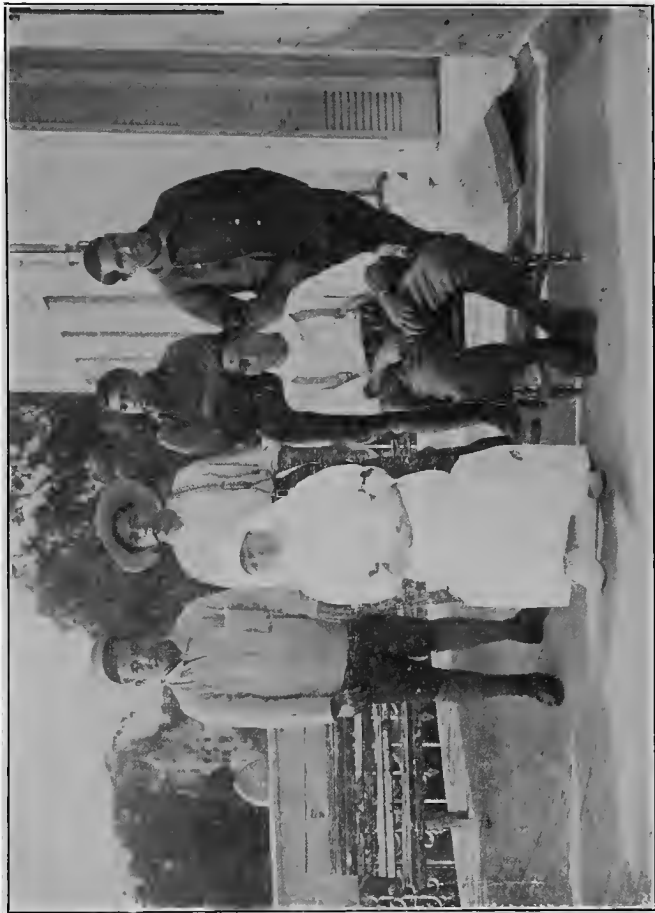
the taking European air. Or one of their number will drum dreamily at his old stringed instrument, or they burst into a chorus of some weird island tune. Sitting also near the music in the centre of the room is a group of darker-skinned Colonials in red fez caps and with earrings, gazing into the machine amazed, captivated.

The blind sailor in dark clothes and glasses is led to his regular seat near the Victrola to listen. He brings with him too his Spanish guitar; although he cannot play. This is a recent present from a kind visiting lady who will stop in now and then to guide the unused fingers on the strings. He brings his own Braille book too which he is learning to read, slowly and painstakingly, in his own fashion.

The Belgian boy, delicate and aristocratic, sits apart in his long chair by the window with pipe and books. He has had no opportunity to read since the war broke out, and he was a student at the University of Brussels. After his convalescence he will return again to the home city where it will be so good to study and dance again!

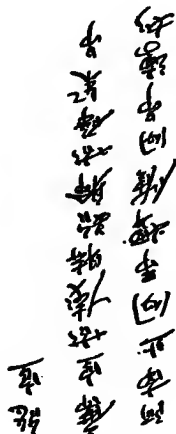
Crowded on long benches, close-packed over the rough board reading-table, soldiers of many nationalities sit over their *Journaux*, the pictured papers, or the *Revue*s of France, political and literary.

At our impromptu writing table, spread with pink blotting paper, there are written letters destined for many countries in languages as various. The Annamites, those humble little hospital helpers in spare white aprons, are the most faithful correspondents. Like solemn Japanese dolls in appearance,—with their coarse black hair brushed straight out in front, above faces white as chalk, and with immovable, round, black eyes fixed



HOSPITAL GROUP

on the paper before them, they manufacture page upon page of characters, beautifully formed, as though to decorate a Chinese tea-box. I asked for a page as souvenir. The writer handed me this with his usual smile, mild and expressionless as a doll's, unable to speak our language and to tell me what it meant.



February 19th is Chinese New Year's. It is customary for them to put stars on red paper; write poems on white paper, which they paste on the red paper and put on people's doors.

How much more we might have learned of their own faraway country, from these amiable little people, had they been able to speak our language as to smile at us with the show of neatly blackened teeth!

An infirmière in white sits on the long wooden bench in the corner, and there are with her a half-dozen French-

men with books and pads. There is the red-cheeked, bright-eyed little Chafford, intent and serious, heavy Camille quick-witted and jovial, Vinsenot, with the neatly upturned black moustache, decorous and slow to learn.

The English lesson must always begin with a recitation of those unfamiliar sounds of our alphabet:—"c'est la pronounciation," they say shaking their heads, easily discouraged. Yet, bravely, if slowly, they recite the letters of the English alphabet and combinations, until they reach the inevitable stumbling block—th—"z-zee—s-see—" they struggle and laugh at the sheer hopelessness.

Then they repeat in unison for the sounds:

all
fall
ball—ball—

"foot-ball? The American game, *n'est-ce pas?*" They wish to know all about it, how it is played in America. Camille will tell us how he played on General Petain's football team against the English. Odd how he never received other injury than sprain to his knee, all the time he was in the trenches,—

"Well, *allons!*" Already a bit puzzled, they continue in chorus another sound for a

lawn
fawn
pawn,—

there again the word suggests something. "Pawn—pawn, *est-ce que c'est Pawnee Indians?* They live in America?"

He has read something about the Indians from Cooper, and wants to know more. Ah yes, how they would all love to hear of the Indians who inhabit America!

Then they have out their exercise books. The hearty laughing Camille has not done the lesson assigned, but instead has translated an article on football from the English *Sporting News*. Vasenot with the correct moustache and Parisian bearing has written his note-book full of proverbs each copied precisely ten times:

"A rolling stone gathers no moss."

"Business is business."

He hands me his book with some assurance and a look of derision for the laughing "sport."

"Aha," murmurs the bright little Chafford with an understanding already for the idiom. His mouse-bright eyes are ever intent on the lesson. For he must learn English for his father's shop, which he will keep after the war.

"So business is business, you say that often in America, what?"

The lesson continues with Chafford's recitation in more literary vein of a verse from Wordsworth's *Daffodils* and a paragraph of translation from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Then they have out those popular text-books to be had on any news-stand: *Parlons Avec Nos Alliés*.

"How-do-you-do."

"How-are-you?" The other members of the Foyer gather about us amused, questioning, until the class recitation ends with an ever-growing chorus, Poilu, Tahitians, Senegalese; surely in very fact it is:

"Parlons Avec Nos Alliés!"

Sitting over small, green felt-covered packing boxes, improvised tables, are the more typical *poilu* groups. Intent couples face each other over the checker-board, or larger groups toss dice in the popular *jeu de l'oie*, or coppers for their game *la manille*. In a corner they are engaged with serious precision and technique over a toy billiard table two feet by three, or all may enter together, with childlike abandon, into any new game suggested. In a long row, one laughing, pushing behind another, each awaits his turn to be blindfolded and twirled three times for the familiar game of "pinning the tail to the donkey,"—only here it is to fasten a yellow bow to the neck of the black cat of hospital manufacture, which adorns the Foyer wall.

Those soldiers with the ingenuous childlike faces under the round little hats with one feather do not join in play with the others. With their scant little coats and brimmed hats, these young Italians appear here for all the world like overgrown children wearing last-year's clothes to a party. They are shy and diffident too, looking on at a game or seated in a corner quietly apart with their books.

Tall and black, the Senegalese, soldiers of Africa, hang somewhat aimlessly about these "*salon*" doors of ours, a little embarrassed to join in a game or even to approach the others too nearly. Their long shapeless faces are dark and smooth like velvet, with lustrous liquid eyes expressive and faithful as a dog's. One feels almost that one might stroke them as one would some sleek animal. Long of limb and loose-jointed, their dark clothes hang baggily on the figure and they wear their red fez caps

as though unaccustomed to them. Certainly they wear their clothes with a notable difference to the French and Italian soldier, who has a certain chic in anything. When the Senegalese spruced up for the occasion, they wore the present of socks just received from a kind visiting lady, on the side of the head,—the foot hanging over as a sort of tassel. Perhaps they notice amused glances in their direction, smothered laughter. Yes, even with this latest addition to their uniform, the Senegalese must feel that they are eternally different! They can speak no word of another language, but watch them laugh and chatter among themselves; the whole face seems to contract and wrinkle until it is little but a line of red lips and flashing white teeth.

Perhaps the thing about this colored race even less understandable to us than their language, is their unique and primitive sense of humor, unless indeed it be their lack of it! Their favorite game, tiddledywinks, is an undertaking not to be considered lightly. Erect and serious, they sit for hours together about the green felt, intent on acquiring skill and technique at flipping the small colored discs with broad black fingers. With much hilarity, and a constant chatter, they entered upon the game of throwing cards into a scrap-basket. I asked that they tell me when the game was finished as I had a prize to give. Presently all came to me each claiming to have won, and all highly amused over this joke of theirs. So I divided the prize, three mandarins, among the group, and the communistic solution threw them into fits of laughter.

The soldier from Senegal took his orange with a delighted grin: then, holding his head on one side, as a con-

noisseur, he peeled it with careful fingers and swallowed all except the skin in two bites. This skin he ate afterwards, as a sort of dessert, smacking his lips over it with especial enjoyment. Then he solemnly handed me the slip of paper I had given him as plate. "But why not eat that too?" asked a *poilu*, and the Senegalese would have followed the suggestion on the instant had I not with some difficulty dissuaded him. So keen is the Senegalese' enjoyment of oranges that we could not refuse them as many as they could eat, and the others might even forget to eat their own as they stood by in interested wonder to watch the Senegalese consume theirs.

There were many Senegalese in hospital, but all looked alike to me. Yet while these comrades of the stocking caps could speak no word of French and would sit and look at picture books upside down by the hour, there was one, black as the rest, to be sure, who it seemed had a classic taste in his reading. He had taken the plays of Molière, of Corneille, and was devoted to Bourget. When he returned a volume of Chateaubriand, *Outre Tomb*, and I saw that the pages were actually cut, I remonstrated:

"But I notice that you have a different taste in your books from your comrades here. Have you perhaps studied in France?"

To my surprise he replied in good French: No, there was a French school at St. Louis, the capital of his country, where he had "learned" philosophy. We asked him whether he would not teach his people some day.

"No, I am not a student."

"What is your *métier*?" I said.

He hung his head, rather shamefaced. "You see I have no *métier* at home. My brother is Chief in our

country, now ; and my people always put my family on the throne,—*nous montent toujours sur le trône*—” So much for recognition of superior intelligence, even in Senegal.

A funny black man from somewhere in the French Guiana, on the point of leaving hospital for Marseilles and his home port, came to the Foyer completely dressed for the trip, even to having the knapsack slung over his shoulder. As a parting present we gave him his choice of a box of cigarettes or a pair of black knit gloves, and he took the gloves ; evidently he had never worn such things before. He stood still, with fingers all outstretched, and it took a dozen of his comrades to put them on for him. They must be put on immediately, he insisted, and I even doubt if they came off again before the end of his journey. With the gloved hands spread before him, fan-fashion, and a tiny American flag in his cap, he paraded about the Foyer commenting upon himself,

“Beaucoup joli !”

The little soldier from Martinique has a different skin, blue-black, hard and smooth, suggestive rather of the surface of a blackboard than the traditional velvet. The whole contour of the face, the protruding reddish-brown eyes, the prominent nose, the full red lips, seem all a protrusion from the straight line of the head behind, and the broad flat forehead. His face is square, sweet and gentle, and becomes positively four-cornered when he smiles. Every day he is unobtrusively on hand to set out tables, chairs, and books for the Foyer. Then he regularly sits down at our table to write his letters home on neat pink note-paper, and is ready to put all away again when the bell rings for the *soupe*.

He is lonely here, the only soldier from his country, and he often talks with us. I tell him of the other soldier from Martinique who was with us in the summer; he was from his own country, but different, after all.

He shakes his head knowingly:

"*C'la dépend*—I have been brought up in a nice family, Mademoiselle." At home he is gardener and works among the flowers and loves to see their bright colors. Here on his lonely walks he has discovered the most colorful gardens of the Riviera. When he goes to town he stops to look through the high Casino windows to watch the Americans dancing.

"How they dance,—*gentil*, they understand how to be gay better than the French. It is so we dance in Martinique, only gayer truly,—always whirling. We dress more gayly than you too, in white suits with flowers, and with broad straw hats when we dance out of doors."

Every day before the Foyer is over he approaches me, cap in hand, and asks if I will perhaps play a game of dominoes. He plays with precision, will answer no one that speaks to him while he is playing, and does not like to have others join in the game. He wishes me to play as well as himself and is even distressed if I lose. He fits the dominoes together carefully, slowly and exquisitely with long black fingers

The small lithe Madagascan with the swarthy gray skin, high cheek bones and aquiline nose, is distinguished-looking in spite of the plain black clothes which he wears here in the hospital, instead of the army doctor's distinguishing uniform to which he is entitled. Among the others he moves quickly and as it were shyly, only seeking some quiet corner where he may sit and read. The hands that

hold the book are thin and marked in contour, the fingers long and shapely, continuing the finely suggested skeleton of the hand. And yet he is not altogether absorbed in his book; from under the rounded, prominent eyelids he glances quickly upward about the room, shyly observing the others at their play. He is alone here of his countrymen and is grateful if we stop and speak with him a moment.

"What is it you are reading to-day?"

Usually it is history, biography, or some journal of medical science. Again it is from the plays of Rostand. His favorite is the idealistic *Princesse Lointaine*. "It is the most beautiful book I have read," with an odd little shake of the head and tears in his eyes.

He knows a little English and is anxious to learn more.

"As a child I had an English governess in Madagascar."

He is busy over his English exercises and soon has progressed beyond the elementary ones. Finally he writes a history of his own country for us. He tells of the theories of scientists regarding his island; of its anthropological story; the conquering Polynesians and the native Vazimba. From the earliest times and peoples he traces tendencies in the civilization of Madagascar to-day. Again he is interested in translating from our own current newspapers and journals. He has followed reports of Doctor Carrel's work in America. He wishes to learn English especially, because it may help him in his own scientific work and researches.

He is proud when able to read Kipling in the original. *Kim* absorbs him. But the dark eyes are only partly dreamy, the whole face alert and mobile. Most he wishes

to learn of actual history, of present conditions in other countries than his own. He asks about education in England and America. At home he has two daughters; now if they were only sons they could of course be doctors after him. He would like to have them grow up independent and self-supporting. But this would necessitate an education very different from the one usually accorded women in Madagascar, and, after all, women should never depart from established precedent.

"You must be impatient to be gone home to your country after so many weeks and months in hospital?"

No, he does not at all begrudge the long weeks and months spent so far from his home. He looks about the busy, crowded Foyer, his quick glance cheerful and inclusive.

"This stay in hospital gives me opportunity to read, to study a little, to learn of different countries and people."

The men from New Caledonia wear the distinguishing brown uniform of the Colonials; otherwise you might possibly mistake them for Frenchmen; but they are a heavier build, on the whole, their faces broader, less well formed. They are in no way intellectual; they have no taste for reading except it be a detective story. Yet they are sophisticated; their taste is for the sensational newspaper, news and papers of the theatrical world, and popular, tuneful music. They like to read for a thrill, an exciting, rapidly moving tale. The detective stories of Le Blanc, but especially the crude *Fantomas Policier*, the same which the Frenchmen pronounce "*bête—ugly*," are favorites of these readers from New Caledonia.

The little La Borde with wide-open eyes, always ready

for any experience of interest or excitement, has discovered on our table *Le Courrier de Washington* . . . "It is concerning Pearl!" The last time he saw it played it was at home in Noumea! This illustrated account of an American film-play is the only volume I have seen in the ward of the New Caledonians. There it remains for weeks, passed from one reader to the next, as they discuss the heroine Pearl and her story.

The elder of the two brothers La Borde, broad-faced and corpulent, and with clumsy, blundering movements, is awkward at everything, except music, for which he seems to have real talent and classic taste. He seriously sings and practices arias from the opera with a full and beautiful voice which struggles for expression.

The little La Borde, light and nervous, quick and mischievous, makes fun of the person and efforts of his serious older brother. He too has an ear for music; a taste for light and popular airs which he plays by the hour on his wooden comb, and so amid the general applause strives to drown out the serious strains of his brother's heavy voice.

One day at the Foyer the big and the little La Borde consented to perform together; the occasion was a sort of temporary truce between the two. The promiscuous members of the Foyer were drawn from their books, their games, to listen in a common semicircle about the performers. The older brother sang popular songs, and his beautiful voice rolled out in *Ferme tes Jolies Yeux*, *Madelon*, *Rêve qui Passe*. The little brother, squatting cross-legged at his feet, blew away on his pipe like some mischievous Pan. The musical Tahitians, unable to keep from their singing, joined with them on stringed instru-

ments, in sweet, weak voices. The conservative poilus gathered close about the performers, listening delightedly, applauding their own popular songs of France.

Here, as in every social gathering, are cliques and differences. The Tahitians play together, the Frenchmen talk together, the men from Caledonia, from Senegal, keep discreetly to themselves. One Colonial will rarely play with a Colonial from a different country. What though they be of the same color they are of a different shade! The Frenchman, however, although he may make impolite remarks afterward, will join with any or all in any sort of game. He has a greeting for the Colonial who sits down beside him; he helps the illiterate with their letters, joins in the conversation. The poilu, quite apart from prejudice, will do at the moment what seems the polite or gracious thing; after all the poilu is *chez lui*.

It is Charlot, sailor and deep-sea diver, who is our host incarnate, the most vital presence which our "Foyer-Salon" has known. In white cook's apron, sleeves rolled to the elbows, and his sailor's tam-o'-shanter perched on the top of his head, it is Charlot, rushing, swaggering somewhere, sleeves rolled up and shuffling slippers; and yet it is Charlot, square, red-faced and smiling, is ever with us, omnipresent and cheerfully obvious. It is Charlot leading the game of bowling on the lawn as we drive in at the gate, and yet it is Charlot who is standing on the steps to receive us when we reach the door; his red face is lit by a flashing smile of welcome, snapping black eyes and whitest teeth. He seems to gather all our packages, phonograph and records, magazines, papers, fruit and all into his strong red arms "at one fell swoop," literally, and is off to help us arrange the

room. When we arrive there we find the open fires going; Charlot has started them. From the first moment Charlot has wound the phonograph, and it never stops till Charlot carries up the wines for supper. Regularly, every day, Charlot still further does the honors of the party by begging me to waltz with him, which honor I feel obliged to as regularly decline. Charlot is nothing daunted, however, and does not lack for partners. There is always at least one lively couple whirling about the hall when Charlot starts the victrola waltzes. It is Charlot dancing with the cook, the Annamite, the shy little soldier of Italy, or the tall and stately brother of the Prince of Senegal.

Now although Charlot is so constantly with us it seems that we are always shaking hands with Charlot either in greeting or farewell. We shake hands with him when he meets us on the steps, again when we reach our Foyer and find Charlot there before us in the attitude of host. Although Charlot is always with us he is always being called away, the natural sequel to his attendance, of course; and each time he goes he shakes hands before leaving, then with a rush and quick handshake he is again in our midst. To-day we have shaken hands with Charlot for the longest and last time. He is ordered back to the sea where there is a ship with gold aboard sunk off Salonique. With many gestures he describes his diving suit and fixtures—then *the* moment, “rrrrrrrrrrr-pp!” then “zip!” rolling his “rs” in great style, and he will be off looking for gold on the bottom! He gets 120 francs for his first hour under water, and, for time in addition, enough to make him a rich man shortly. He will send us a postal and tell us what his luck is.

Martin is always with us, as is Charlot, but quietly laying out books on the table or doing something unobserved in a corner. He is a stumpy, shabby, little poilu, with the keenest, alert, gray eyes. Martin rarely plays a game or reads a book, but he is busy putting something in order until it is time to put things away. On the whole Martin has a New England spirit; he reminds one of the old lady who never slept very well, because she was in such a hurry to be up and have her bed made in the morning. He is anxious to be at home again with his mother after the years spent in Salonique. He is sure his mother needs him, she cannot take care of herself very well; "*pensez!—par exemple*" she happened to be out in the street when the command was given to leave their town, Verdun; and she actually allowed herself to be hurried away without once venturing into the house for the stocking under her mattress where were their savings, 3000 francs! Martin shakes his head prudently, unbelieving. Of course one would know there was a *bas de laine* history connected with the mother of quiet, quaint, shrewd little Martin.

We might well compare our Foyer to any little *café* in the provinces, where the Frenchman will sit for an entire afternoon in converse with his neighbors, or alone even over his *Journal*, his glass and pipe.

Gustot, with the long brown beard, older than most of the others, merely came down to smoke his pipe in a corner and to watch the children play. When the pipe was finished, however, he would join with any other old poilu in a slow game of checkers which might last throughout an afternoon. It is no easy matter holding one's own in a *jeu de dames* when a poilu of many years "campaign-

ing" is one's adversary. Every move is most carefully thought over; it is advised and advised against. There is always an audience to watch, when two face each other over the checker-board.

Music seemed in some way a foreign element to this "*salon*" of the *poilu*, and yet if it were a popular song of France, something they already knew and liked that our Victrola played, they would look up much pleased, and sing or whistle in accompaniment. The song which awakened the greatest response was *Charge de l'Armée Française*, the song these soldiers used to sing when they went forward to attack. At the first bugle note with which the song opens they jumped from their chairs; they whistled, they sang, they beat time to the music. And the sedate old Gustot with the beard, away with his pipe in a corner, beat on the arms of his chair until I thought it would break, and sang a lusty accompaniment, his eyes glistening, with what I could not tell, but I thought, as I looked at him, that I gained first-hand information, for a moment, of his qualities as a soldier.

There came a sort of hush over the Foyer; a lady was there with a basket of brown paper parcels, a *cadeau* for each of the men. They held their breaths; for everyone a pair of hand-knitted woolen socks, a *briquet* for their cigarettes! The faces looked embarrassed and touched, then one of them cried: this was the first "*cadeau*" he had received for years. His mother and sister used to knit him socks for each cold winter at the *jour de l'an*, but now,—his home was destroyed three years ago.

The passage around the Foyer of a box of cigarettes from America was a function all by itself. Whether interested in reading or checkers each *poilu* would take

time for his individual expression of thanks; they might be brief words: "*Merci, Madame,*" but there is a peculiar reverence and radiance when the poilu speaks gratitude from the bottom of his heart. He takes the gold-tipped cigarette attentively, and, with the air of a connoisseur holds it in particularly gingerly fashion between thumb and forefinger, just as though it were the prettiest, most fragile thing imaginable. The passage of the box around the Foyer is followed by such a universal expression of contentment, and marked by so many glowing cigarette ends and twisting columns of smoke, that it might almost seem that there were suddenly lit so many little fires on as many cozy hearths to help warm this cold gray hall.

THE POILU'S BOOKS

THE long tables all about the hall are bright with the colored covers of popular papers. There is the blatantly gay *Baionette*, *Illustration* with its charming colored plates, the popular *Science et la Vie*, the *Miroir*, and the large yellow *Cartes Larousse*; *Le Monde et le Théâtre*, pictures of theatrically dressed women on the conspicuous covers. Over the tables are grouped the Colonials in motley colors and odd bits of uniform, wonderingly turning the pictured pages, or the more thoughtful Frenchmen, in pale blue, with round shoulders, bending to the more literary *Revues*.

They read the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, conservative, Royalist and Catholic; the *Revue* and the *Revue de Paris*, wider in range and vision; *Le Mercure* where new writers, new thought, poetry and prose find a place. All laugh for a time together over *Baionette's humeur grossière*; it does not amuse for long and they turn readily to the others, the better thing. For there are *Illustration*, *Lectures Pour Tous*, *La Science et la Vie*, *Le Miroir*, reflecting popular science, invention, thought, picturesque scenes and events of the day. Those pretty Alsatian pictures, the fêtes and life in Alsace after the armistice, catch their eye especially. They have been particularly interested in articles and pictures which show any section of the country where they or their comrades have been on campaign, or which have to do with their own branch of the service or with that of a friend. They read eagerly about their present-day heroes, Foch and Clemenceau; the lat-

ter they have thought a good war tiger—but now? This and many other questions they have asked of themselves and of each other as they read.

Here and there a soldier has pulled his stool to the window or away in a corner under a dim electric light in the ceiling and is reading in his brown-covered volume a *roman d'amour* probably, quite oblivious of everything else.

Back of the table in the corner, heaped high with brown covered volumes, stands an infirmière in white; and there is a continual procession to Madame's table, poilus, cooks and scrubwomen, each with a brown volume to return and wishing to take another. Again her table is the intimate social centre of our Foyer; to her the men bring their books for discussion, their own stories and confidences. These poilus are frank and yet with a great reticence; and so it was that suddenly, after rather banal talk, we might catch a glimpse of the real man,—work, books, wife, education of children, the meaning of life, the feeling for religion. It was an endless variety, each man indeed has his "*jardin secret*." We found them ever eager, inquiring men, sceptical, yes, but not disheartened; talking most intelligently of the larger problems of life.

Or they sit silently for an afternoon, deciding on their choice of books, browsing here and there in old favorites, idly turning the pages. Indeed we may compare this *bibliothèque* of the poilu to any little *café* in the provinces where the Frenchman sits sipping his coffee, the small glass of *sirop*, or white wine and water, but lingers as long as he likes for the quiet talk over his glass, the game of checkers, or the reading of the day's *Journal*. And

for the provincial *café's Dame de comptoir* here we have a *Madame l'Infirmière* exchanging books instead of coppers.

Madame's function of giving books is of equal importance with theirs of asking. We did not give them a library ready-made; indeed "What will the poilu read?" we wondered. "After all they are not *très instruits*; give them anything sensational," we were advised. And yet we did not buy for them those *livres de scandale* which may be had on any newsstand for six sous. Those books which are so frankly, so cleverly or stupidly *risqué*, to meet the vulgar taste. Naturally the poilu has often purchased them for his own amusement. Trash costs less, for one thing. But is it not also most natural that the conservative Frenchman, given the opportunity, should turn to what is indeed his own, his inherited literary tradition? Through men who had thought and written the thought of Frenchmen throughout the years, in verse and prose, in varying moods and conditions, we merely tried to help the reader to find himself.

Our term "standard books" cannot be applied to those we chose for their library: for, to the Frenchman his literature is a living thing, individual as the writer,—or the reader. Yet in spite of particular differences and the years' outer changes, certain fundamental French characteristics remain the same. The *âme chevaleresque* comes from Roland, through du Guesclin and Bayard, to Foch, Petain, Joffre, and the smallest poilu of them all. The chivalry lies hidden sometimes, but it is there. Daily and hourly it has found its natural expression in the simplest act of these peasant soldiers:

"Ya meime eu des foés, dans les côtes,
"Que j'ons porté les sacs des aut'es
"Afin d'leû porter un peu s'cours
"Malgré qu'moi-meim' jétions ben las! . . . "

These poilus have high ideals, and they are for *la Patrie*,—not for *la Patrie* as a whole, perhaps, but more especially for that section or *département* which each man calls his own, his *pays*, moreover his own little square of earth, if he is fortunate enough to own one. This they would defend with a smile to their last breath, and, each defending his own, together they have defended *la Patrie*.

"Et qu'les gâs qui cultiv' la terre
C'est leur devoir ed la défendre."

They are interested naturally in stories of their own *pays*, their *département*. Descriptions of country or landscape are particularly enjoyed. Many a man has spoken especially of a paragraph, or phrase, describing some section of country familiar to him. For the land-man's every fibre of being is of the soil, and even is he by circumstance a townsman, his heart is usually in the country. The sea-faring men have wished to read of the sea. The Bretons are not captivated only by the genius of Loti. Even that little book *Guenn*, by the American, Blanche Willis Howard, translated into the French, was read with pleasure by our Breton sailor and passed on to his comrades in the hospital. *Ramuntcho* of Antole France pleased the men of the Basque Pyrénée country, so Balzac those of Touraine. Dumas and Hugo might appeal especially as they write of Paris, as Theuriet of Savoy, and

Lac d'Annency, Lamartine of Lac Bourget and Aix in his *Méditations*, and Daudet of the *Midi*, from his "*Moulin*" not far from Arles.

The books most read cover a wide field: Racine, Corneille, Balzac, Bordeaux, Bourget, Daudet, Dumas, De Vigny, Anatole France, Hermant, Victor Hugo, Lamartine, Le Blanc, Moreaux, Rostand, Theuriet. Here are *comédies humaines, roman, roman psychologique, contes, aventures, humeur, philosophie*.

The Frenchman demands above all that his book should be sincere. He has no patience with pretense or insincerity. Let a man write what he knows, not pretend to write what he does not know. The books must be real, alive, vital, and contain thought. For the Frenchman reads thoroughly what he reads, never with the surface of the mind. For him there is no reading of headlines. He reads all; enjoys the descriptions as the dialogue, and finally judges the work in its entirety.

He is logical and thinks in order and in sequence; the Romans taught him that. By nature he has an analytical mind, investigating, not to add fact to fact, after the manner of the Germans, but from his intense interest to find out about some subject which appeals to him. The French like to investigate life in every way; hence their problem plays, therefore their interest in philosophy and science. French humor contains thought; it is subtle, excelling in the *double entendre*. Certainly except when this humor is frankly *grossier*, it is a "battledore and shuttlecock" of words and phrases. And their pleasure when a word or a phrase has pleased them is not only a matter of wits, it constitutes a part of the love of all form and beauty of language. The Frenchman is not a sentimentalist, but

has a deep sense of sentiment, which is hidden, often, under a mocking exterior.

He is, as a rule, a philosopher, a gay philosopher, but one who yet sees things *en noir*. From that comes his morbidity. Knowing this tendency, sometimes consciously, more often unconsciously, he takes refuge in his *ralleries*. Cynical he is as he sees too keenly not to be. He has a clear vision and sees deeply and with insight. From his ancestors he has been a warrior born, who saw the rude side of life before the gay. They learned the art of reflecting, observing, laughing, yes, and mocking too—as Figaro has it in Beaumarchais' *Le Barbier de Seville*: ". . . parcourant philosophiquement les deux Castilles, La Manche, . . . partout supérieur aux événements, loué par ceux-ci, blâmé, par ceux-la; aidant au bon temps, supportant le mauvais, me moquant des forts; bravant les méchants; riant de ma misère. . . . Je me presse de rire de tout, de peur d'être obligé d'en pleurer"—there is the Frenchman's esprit! His philosophy makes him really the most patient of men in peace, and in war willing to fight to the finish; but, the war over, ready to make peace if the enemy is sincere.

The authors of the so-called period of the *Restauration* were the ones the *poilus* liked best. These were those writers, Hugo, Dumas, De Vigny, who brought life back to French literature, dared to be original, skeptical, inquiring into every subject, whether of God or man,—realists, but not to the extent of Zola, and idealists as well. They, Hugo, Dumas and the others, looked beyond France and learned to know Shakespeare, Scott and Byron, as did our men. Writer and reader alike were investigators, con-

sciously or unconsciously ever thinking, slowly meditating.

About the library table we had many more talks about life and the wider questions than we had of books as books; but these talks arose naturally out of some book the soldiers were reading. So we were discussing Lamartine and Hugo and certain ideas when the poilu-blacksmith said, "We do not understand, many of us, but we are all thinking." Meditation, evidently, goes with a Frenchman's reading as with his fishing, when, by the Seine, in Brittany, and Normandy, in the Basque country, by the canals of the Loire or in Touraine, north, south, east and west, wherever a stream is available, the Frenchman on a vacation will fish—and meditate. And men who have the patience to fish all day whether they catch or not, who work slowly, who meditate, can endure long strains and go far,—they even love to read long books! Then what, one wonders, will the Frenchman, the poilu of the future be? Will machines and inventions kill all the handwork, the love of the beauty of each thing made? Will to-day's commercial mechanism destroy the willingness, yes the desire to work more slowly, that each bit of work be more perfect? What will the rush, the making everything by machine, no more work for its own sake, but work for the money's sake, what will this do to these men? Will the cinema take the place of reading, of days spent in the country, picnics in the woods,—and destroy the love of fishing also? And what are the fishermen thinking these days?

War has been an awakener of minds. "We do not understand, many of us, but we are all thinking." And as war has awakened many sleeping minds, so it has strengthened

atavistic instincts good and bad. And shall we wonder that this be most evidently so with a conservative, thoughtful people? How many times before this has France known the cataclysm of war! Revolutions have upset her time and time again. The low have become high, the high low. Yet today the fisherman has gone back to his accustomed place on the banks of his stream, and the returned soldier, convalescent in hospital, sits peacefully reading his Corneille, his Molière or Hugo. He remembers the book from school-days, it may be, and too, may he not have had an ancestor who knew and loved literature in the days before the great revolution? Idle speculation while this alone is sure; there exists in the very mind and soul of France an instinct for the best, which rises, like good seed, forever fresh and green.

The mere name of a classic made these *poilu* readers curious and eager; they might wish for an old volume, something they had heard of a long time ago, or else it was for what they had already read, that their tired minds would re-discover; I have rarely seen a Frenchman who did not have his favorite. They have wished for just this volume or that one of Molière, Corneille or Racine, and it is because of this scene or that one they want it, or because they "remember a pretty verse here or there." And where have they found opportunity to know and love their books so well; these *cultivateurs*, street-car conductors, these little shopkeepers and townspeople, for the past four years the *poilus* of France?

"Oh, that was a long time ago," they might tell you indefinitely; and yet it is not so long either, since they went to school in black socks and apron and learned, as naturally as they spoke their first words at the mother's knee,

to recite from La Fontaine's fables "*La cigale ayant chanté tout l'été*," *Renard* and *Corbeau*, and wrote their childish *dictée*. Even then they were following in thought, criticizing what they had read. Then up to their fourteenth year, they learned in verse and prose of the men who have made France famous, her glories, her folly and her charm; the speaking, living France, the same for whom they have been fighting. Perhaps they like to remember those earlier years now, at any rate they would re-acquaint themselves with heroes, visions, and adventure of which they have known too little in these last years, crowded with actuality. Yet ask them have they found a book amusing, interesting? They are easily indifferent, never "thrilled." For the book they really like they have an answering smile of pure satisfaction and words of highest praise: "Yes, it is *joli, bien écrit*."

Our volumes of Hugo were perhaps the most popular, and as hand and eye discovered them happily, at once, the men would carry them away reading and quoting. Those who had not read before would take a volume a day, following the irresistible adventure of the tale, while those who knew their story well kept their favorite volume a *livre de chevet*, literally, for days on the bolster of their beds. Surely the reasons for the popularity of Hugo are not far to seek: readers of many nations have, in common with the poilu, followed the romance of Cosette and Marius, of Fantine, and have greatly loved their Jean Valjean. For it is Jean Valjean who captivates by his courage as by his patience, by his inexhaustible goodness, even. Victor Hugo wrote of the live France which he knew, knew the people, felt as they did. And they in turn love even his *panache*, his extrava-

gance is forgiven. In fact, if sincerity goes with the *panache* it is not only forgiven but admired. They appreciate his genius, his thought and spirit, as they admire his absolute independence. We are reminded of that saying of Hugo, "Something exists between me and the people that makes us understand each other." Indeed shall we not believe that there may exist the closest bond between the human, the greatly loving poet and patriot and these soldiers, shabby, war-weary, who turned to his pages for forgetfulness and solace? To whom, indeed, would the master story-teller, friend of the wretched, the lowly, the lover of youth and of all its young romance, rather have spoken, than to these soldier-children, the poilus of France?

But it was not those novels we all know best, *Les Misérables*, *Travailleurs de la Mer*, *Quatre-Vingt-Treize*, which were popular. Naumendorff, with the thinned red hair and the rheumatism, and his thirty-one years, "*le vieux*" the comrades called him, was absorbed in Hugo's more philosophical *Avant* and *Pendant l'Exil*, where the writer speaks so plainly his convictions, ideals on all the varied aspects of humanity, of his life, political and artistic. It was difficult to make our poilu-patient get up and hobble across the room while we made his cushiony bed; he did not wish to put down his book.

"Long ago I read Hugo's *romans*, but in this book I come to know Hugo himself; yes, it is *fort intéressant*."

The novels of Dumas, but especially *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, *Vingt Ans Après* and *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne* came close in popularity to Hugo. And here again is France, the France of Louis XIII and of Louis le Grand. It was a long time ago they read *Les Trois Mousquetaires*

and came to know their *d'Artagnan*, the joy of every French boy's heart, and now they would know more of his story. *Vingt Ans Après* is a case of three thick volumes, you know, and *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne* is in six. So I warned them. But as the Frenchman likes to fish all day in the same stream whether he catch or not, so he will read all day of the same hero. He becomes a familiar, and is enjoyed the more. Methodically they came back for one volume after another, readers who might tell us with Stevenson that they " . . . have approached the *Vicomte*, not across country, but by the legitimate, five-volumed avenue of the *Mousquetaires* and *Vingt Ans Après*, . . . " surely a proof that they know and love it well. Joyfully, with Stevenson, they " . . . would turn again to that crowded and sunny field of life in which it was so easy to forget . . . " Many there are to question the literary merit of Dumas, but the poilus of France, like our own well-loved writer and critic, have read and re-read their story; "and this is the particular crown and triumph of the artist—not to be true merely, but to be lovable; not simply to convince, but to enchant."

Not only is one of these volumes of Dumas a *livre de chevet*, a book to be treasured at the very pillow of one's bed, it is the common possession of all. Not usually inclined to talk of, or to discuss their books, yet they would speak of Porthos and Athos, of Aramis and d'Artagnan, naturally, familiarly almost, as if they were not characters in a book, but vivid living personalities, whom all knew in common. Different characters at different times claimed the reader's interest or sympathies: bashful, southern Porthos, mysterious Athos, Aramis so clever and intriguing. But it is ever d'Artagnan, daring, dashing, affectionate,

gay, the hero of cloak and sword, immortal example of the hero of France, the favorite of the world, who is also the favorite of the poilu, the "comrade" whom they especially love. Ever they would follow his story, his enchanting and enchanted life; they read in their beds, on the library bench, or stretched on sunny garden banks above the sea, in sight even of that storied "Isle St. Marguerite" where, under the order of the King, d'Artagnan conducts his mysterious prisoner, the man in the iron mask. . . .

In our "*Foyer-Bibliothèque*" Jules Verne's books of travel and adventure came and went incessantly in their tattered covers, and we must have a supply of many copies; even so they did not lie on our table, but were exchanged rapidly from hand to hand. Did we see a soldier waiting with an especially worn volume and an eager look of anticipation, we knew that he was there to make a certain trade and to learn more of the history of "*Les Enfants*," Mary Grant and her brother, on search for their father around the world. Next to *Les Enfants du Capitaine Grant*, *Vingt Mille Lieues Sous Les Mers* was popular. "How this leads the imagination away," one of the soldiers said to me. Away is it, or back, from the actual world of tire and pain, and satiety of adventure to the time when, thrilled to have won his prize at school,¹ he carried the book home with him in his shiny knapsack. Was it not even then that he may have made his first voyage around the world with the children of the Captain, that he followed his boy's imagination up in a balloon, down to the depths of

¹ The books of Jules Verne are customarily given as prizes for work done at the Lycée.

the sea? So, after his own life of activity this conservative poilu of France would live again the long, happy evenings of boyhood, the joy of all first adventure.

With the exception of Verne's stories, which owe their popularity to quite other reasons, a book must have some sort of love-story connected with it to be really popular. "*L'amour*", of course, every Frenchman must have. He whose *Patrie* is a woman, whose Saints, *par excellence*, Jeanne d'Arc and St. Genevieve, knows the love of idealism. As he is a lover, the Frenchman is a psychologist, with the psychologist's curiosity, and all love problems interest him, the more *intime* the better. With him it must ever be *cherchez la femme*, be it for good or evil. Again, few know as the Frenchman the serenity of family happiness: life in the country, Sundays in the *Bois* with wife and children.

Though it treat of love, poetry, as such, apart from certain plays, was little read. Even de Musset was taken but once, by a comedian from Paris. Rostand's *La Princesse Lointaine*, with its idealistic theme, was read by individual Frenchmen, and by educated colonials, Madagascan and Belgian alike, but it was not universally appreciated. *Chantecler* is too forced, *fantastique* of course. And yet Rostand is loved by them all and "there is no one like Rostand" any poilu would tell us. For it is Rostand who, in his turn, brings life to French literature, who shows the real France, "Cyrano," France incarnate, youth, *âme guerrière, chevaleresque*. In this character gayety, bravery, *panache*, but also endurance, idealism and love, disinterested, misunderstood, triumph finally. And can we wonder at the popularity of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, with an historical appeal part of the very tradition of

France, and an appeal to sentiment, to sentimentality, the strongest with all simple people? The interpretations of Sarah Bernhardt and the cinema, too, are undeniably agents which today might come near to tradition in their influence on the thought of the provinces.

Bordeaux's novels of sentiment and domestic problem, *La Peur de Vivre*, *La Robe de Laine*, *Les Yeux Qui s'Ouvrent*, have a strong appeal to sentiment and sentimentality. And the somewhat "slow" style is made up for by its reflective quality. To a less extent the stories *moitiés sentimentales* of Alphonse Karr, *Sous les Tilleuls*, and others, are popular. The sensational stories of George Sand, *Valentine* and *Indiana* are favorites, as are Octave Feuillet's sentimental *L'Histoire d'un Jeune Homme Pauvre*, and others. *Jean d'Agrève*, that novel of passionate love-letters, was of course welcomed to every lonely poilu's heart.

The sensational but well-written novels of Montepin, *La Porteuse du Pain*, and *L'Argent*, were eagerly and rapidly read. But sensation alone is never of paramount interest. Detective stories, even Le Blanc's Sherlock Holmes series, were less popular than we might suppose. The attractive "*Gentleman Cambrioleur*" has his undeniable charm, of course, while the crude *Fantomas Policier* in spite of its black flags, its spies, and mysterious letters, they quite frankly did not like; it is "*bête, ugly.*"

What might be called the "love idyll of the country," the simple, wholesome love story, the setting familiar countryside or coast, was most dearly loved by our readers. Such books are *Chanteraine*, *Mon Oncle Flo*, and all the short stories of André Theuriet. There are Loti's

Le Matelot and *Pêcheur d'Islande*, charming tales of their own fishing villages. There are the novels by Bazin, interpreter of the peasants, a realist, yet a devoted churchman and without the brutality of Zola. *Oberlé* with its theme of patriotism and the Alsatian question had the added popular appeal of the moment. And its sequel *Les Nouveaux Oberlé* continuing the history of those same Alsatian families through the war of 1914-18, as it appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, was eagerly read, passed from hand to hand. What wonder that *La Terre qui meurt*, *Donatienne*, *Le Blé qui Lève*, and all those stories dealing with the question of *retour à la terre*, were eagerly read by these peasant soldiers.

The sentiment for *retour à la terre* is popular not only as a literary theme in a novel. A stumpy little poilu with a freckled, unimaginative face asked one day for a book to help him raise cabbages and rabbits when he should return to his father's farm in the invaded district. And so we added to our library the whole suite of *Jardin Potager* which had at once a rapid circulation, some reading the books on gardening and poultry raising, the *basse-cours*, some asking particularly for books on the raising of cabbages or *canard*, and *porc*, most popular of all!

When we carried a basket of new books to the wards we were greeted with enthusiasm quite equal to the pleasurable reception of cigarettes. The popular *roman d'amour*, short stories of Bazin, Sand, Octave Feuillet, in the light paper-covered volumes and illustrated editions, were most easily held by the tired men in bed.

"*Les jours nous sont très longs,*" they told us, and "it is our books help us *passer de bons moments.*"

Unless he has had some experience in a foreign country I have not found the French soldier either curious or eager to read of a country other than his own. The soldiers returned from Eastern campaigns had their curiosity aroused to an unusual extent for the conservative Frenchman, by the weird, strange life of the East. It is the veiled mysterious women of Eastern cities who made them wonder especially, and they took out Loti's *Désenchantées* and *Azyade* with eagerness. They were interested, yes, but their verdict was not wholly favorable. Language, style, are not enough for the poilu's astute mind. With a shrug, they are quite sure Loti sees things "*couleur de rose.*"

Have they had no experience in a foreign country it may be the mere name of a classic will attract. A curious trio, Shakespeare, Poe and Cooper, were asked for. They "would read anything Shakespeare had written," but they would like best *Romeo and Juliet*, of course. Certainly it is no wonder that this love story, *par excellence*, should appeal to the Frenchman; the story of Romeo and Juliet will form part of his inheritance, a tradition almost, through the rendering of it by Gounod, loved composer of France. They had heard of Poe, but it was evident they enjoyed the *Contes* quite on their own merit, especially *Le Scarabée d'Or*. Of Cooper's works they had heard in connection with the American Indian. Cooper's *La Prairie* was his only book I could secure for them. It was taken, but only once; the poilu who read it returned it with a queer shake of the head: "*Ca ne me plait pas,*" and word would seem to have

been passed on to his comrades, for after that no one asked for Cooper.

Les Derniers Jours de Pompei I recommended once; after this, the volume was in constant circulation; this and Crocket's fantasy of Scotch life *La Capote de Lilas*, the history of *The Lilac Sunbonnet*, were the two books on our library catalogue as popular with the French as their own.

When our French soldier-reader had discovered a foreign book which he liked, he seemed as much pleased with himself as with what he read. Word was passed from one to the other with a knowing, superior nod: "It is *assez bien*."

History, accounts of travel and adventure in a foreign country, were not much read. Even Charcot's account of his antarctic expedition was seldom taken. Books on Africa, *A Travers l'Afrique* and others, dealing, as they do with a field more intimately connected with French history, were more often read. Written by less skilful narrators, accounts of actual fact, this sort of books had however, none of the appeal of those stories of Jules Verne which are able so well to "lead the imagination away." But those highly interesting scientific pamphlets of l'Abbé Moreaux, *d'Où Venons Nous, Où Allons Nous, Un Jour dans la Lune*, those which encourage thought and speculation on our origins, on physical phenomena, have an irresistible appeal to the Frenchman's curiosity and speculative habit.

The exception to the general run of *histoires*, seldom read, were any books dealing with the life of Napoleon. The fishermen of this part of the coast look far over the sea toward Corsica, place of Napoleon's

birth, for the light to break through the clouds over the island, an omen of calm seas and a cloudless sky after the storm. And through their books the soldiers in the Riviera hospital would follow the story of their hero. Have, after all, Napoleon's youthful dreams for the glory and good of France conquered his often mistaken ambitions of later life?

Among current or scientific literature, books on America had the appeal of an irresistibly popular and timely subject. Highly illustrated, somewhat sensational books and booklets on American industry, skyscrapers, travels, and industrialism, were glanced through with interest. But the leisurely philosophical *Lettres d'un vieil Américain à un Français* were more generally read. The poilus asked especially for a book on American women, but the somewhat historical account of distinguished American women in Theodore Bentson's *Femmes d'Amérique* was not the sort they were looking for. They were satisfied by a wholly different type of book which answered their curiosity from a more philosophical and less historical, also from a popular and contemporary angle; in Varigny's *Femmes d'Amérique* they might get the point of view of one of their own contemporary countrymen.

Anything written by, or concerning the late Theodore Roosevelt has almost the appeal of the classic for the Frenchman. The name of Roosevelt is universally known; Doridon, Chasseur Alpin, *blanchisseur*, by *métier*, was the first of our poilus to ask for some book on Roosevelt. *La Vie Intense* was the only book we could buy at the time—following Doridon's recommendation this was continually taken out. After Colonel Roosevelt's death I was

besieged with demands for some account of the life and work of Roosevelt.

President Wilson was of course the sensation of the moment, but of him the men told me they read enough through the newspapers.

With the exception of books on aviation, *La Vie en Grand Air*,—a subject which has in itself a romantic and imaginative appeal—"war books" were little read.

Loti's *l'Horreur Allemande* and one or two others on the same theme never had their pages cut. "We are tired of hearing what our own people tell about the Germans; if you could get some book wholly unprejudiced, just a history of the war on both sides." At a time when we in America wished for little but war literature *l'Odyssée d'un Transport Torpillé*, *Le Feu*, were seldom taken from our shelves. A *Capitaine* to whom *Le Feu* was lent did not approve it at all: "*Il est grossièrement écrit et pas à recommander*," and of course this was no book for the poilu, since it must seem to him a mere chapter of horror, unenlightened by his own simple sentiment and idealism. One of the men has perhaps well expressed the attitude of them all when he said that no man who had not been in the real war at the front could write of it. No imagination could picture the reality; while those who had actually been there could not find words to describe what they knew. So, quite aside from the fact that the soldier who had lived war did not wish to read about it, he thought war books worthless.

Just one war poem they proclaimed true. Seated, one afternoon, a group of comrades together about the fire, one poilu read aloud to the others, from a poem he had found and liked: *La Passion de Notre Frère le Poilu*:

C'était un pauvr' bougre d'Poilu,
 Qui s'en allait sous la mitraille . . .
 Vantié ben qu'î n'aurait voulu
 Etre en aut' part qu'en la bataille;
 Mais, du moment qu' fallait qu' î n'y aille,
 Ben, î n'y allait, tout simplement,
 Sachant ben que, contr' sa misère,
 Ya point à fair' de raisoun'ment,
 Et qu' les gâs qui cultiv' la terre,
 C'est leur devoir ed' la défendre,—

And so on, in the *patois* of Anjou, it is a crude but tender poem, yet withal a bit of their own lives, their thought, to which these poilus listened. There came a wonderful lightening of those grave faces, reposeful in the firelight, and smiles of simplest appreciation, approval: "*C'est bien,*"—"si c'est comme ca," "*c'est vrai,*" came in low tones from one man after another.

In spite of the fact that the mere name of Daudet is one to conjure with, and the popularity of *Le Petit Chose*, *Tartarin*, and all those stories, Daudet's *Contes de Lundi* was a book rarely taken, nor was Deroulede's History of the War of 1870, *Feuilles de Route*. But Deroulede's dramatic *Chants du Soldat* have a certain appeal for the reader of to-day as they had for the soldier of 1870.

Le Soldat Chapuzot, *La Cantine Chapuzot*, and all that suite which have pictured the life of the poilu of 1914-18 in humorous vein, were read with keen enjoyment. But *Chapuzot* was not popular for its connection with the war, but rather because it is "*rigolo*," funny. They might laugh at the droll Chapuzot, at themselves even, in this "*simple soldat*":

"Tel que vous m'voyez, j'ai eu de l'ambition, moi dans les commencements: j'ai voulu être dans la musique, j'ai pas pu! J'ai essayé d'être caporal, j'ai pas réussi! Après ça, j'ai fait du tambour, et le tambour-major m'a fichu à la porte de l'école parce que je ne faisais pas son affaire et que j'lui crevais toutes ses pieaux!

"Bref, y a que dans la cuisine que j'ai pu me rendre utile. Eh bien! Vous m'croirez si vous voulez, mais on m'a rendu un fier service en me flanquant à la porte de partout, et en m'forçant à rester simple 'troubade' de première classe comme je suis.

"Ah! non! pour sûr! J'changerais pas ma position pour les deux galons rouges de 'cabot' ou les galons d'or de 'sous-off'!"

. . . . And what else of the war and its life had been, turned to song and laughter was not a literary preference, but a fundamental part of that joyous outlook on life characteristic of the poilu, as is that proverb of his Latin race *Carpe Diem!*

"Maintenant que tout le monde met sac au dos, tout le monde crie: 'Vive la Classe!' Ce qu'on pourrait traduire par la phrase: 'Ah! quel plaisir de n'être bientôt plus soldat!'"

Yes, for the moment he was our poilu of France,—and there is no one so enjoys a joke though it be on himself. Yet the reading of *Chapuzot* is only for an hour's laughter, for a day, after all. As he was a poilu, so he is protector of the unified history and tradition of a conservative Latin country. Surely he turns from the reading of what is modern, transitory, back to his older favorites: to Molière, Balzac, Hugo or Dumas.

For though he have come from farm or city or town-

ship,—from Eastern or Western Front, he is inheritor also of that which he protects: the singular sureness and conservatism of taste, that knowledge and love of the best, which long generations before him have produced; culture, *goût*, call it what you will, a slow-growing, beautiful thing, he has it from his fathers, who have been soldiers, farmers, countrymen before him. And this is why the brown-covered volumes of our *Bibliothèque* might have inside them the words of Corneille, of Loti or Rostand.

. . . . From the dark hall and the library table I have seen the men wander out into the spring sunshine with their books to lie in the green grass among multi-colored wild flowers, and to discover in the pages before them simple things yet magical,—words born of the blood and spirit of their race, even as they are children of that sweet, warm soil on which they lay.

In fancy, each was led away to some state old but easily imagined. And, as I yet picture them, invalided soldiers in blue, lying together there on that green bank among the slender, springing flowers, it is the particular circumstances which brought them there, today seem unreal, or relatively insignificant,—an accidental page, a sketch inserted in the sane, sure History of Race and Thought.

